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#46

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PULITZER PRIZE WINNING ARTIST
JEFF MacNELLY
TAKES HIS "SHOE" OUT OF HIS MOUTH!

"MAN OF THE YEAR" —
RICK WERFT
A RAP WITH A *REAL* RETAILER!

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

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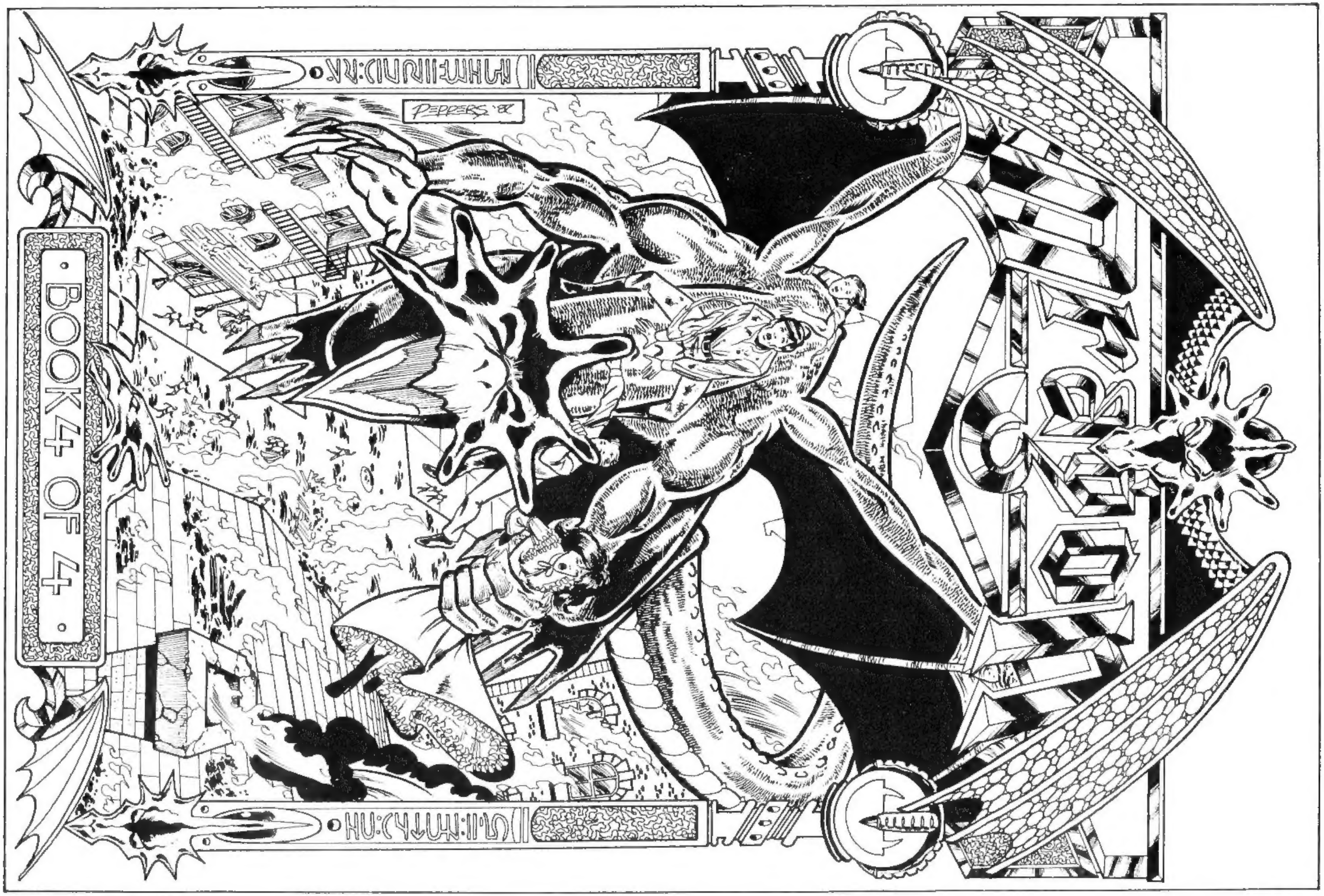

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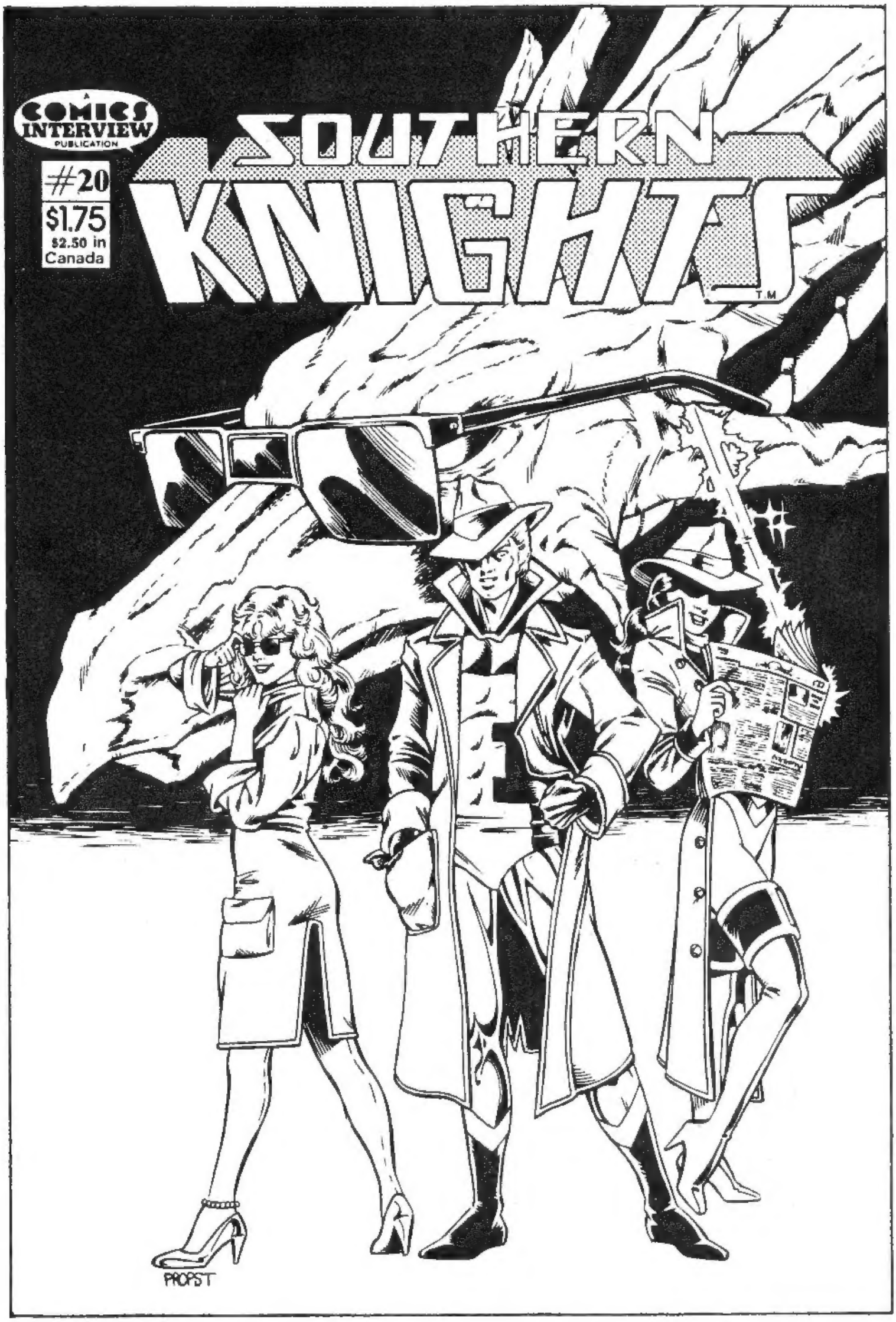

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SENSATIONAL SNOUT
to peep, perchance to dream

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cover contributed by:
ART ADAMS
original costume designs for shadowcat

UP FRONT

In case you haven't been paying as much attention to these sorts of things as we do, you may not have noticed that SOUTHERN KNIGHTS has reached the magic issue #20, making it one of the longest-running black-and-white comics around. (And, yeah, we know CEREBUS is up to #100 — give us time, we'll get there!)

Not only that, but our graphic album collections are going strong, too, making the rare earlier issues available at a very inexpensive price. We're up to EARLY DAYS OF THE KNIGHTS #3 (with the fourth volume, ORIGINS OF THE SOUTHERN KNIGHTS, scheduled for Christmas). And, by popular demand, the first volume is available again in its second printing (featuring the first two issues, as drawn by X-FACTOR/FLASH artist **Jackson Guice**).

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Coming your way very soon — again, by popular demand! — is a four-issue saga starring Dragon, the popular character from the Southern Knights, in solo stories! One of the last survivors of an ancient, powerful race, he is not a man who can turn into a dragon — he *is* a dragon. One who rediscovered his race's ability to assume human form. One who survived. This is the story of Dragon's journey through history.

Best of all, you won't have to wait forever to read the full story, since DRAGON will be coming out WEEKLY in August! Taken together, the four issues add up to a comics novel that you won't want to miss.

So pass the word: black-and-white comics may come and go, but SOUTHERN KNIGHTS is here to stay!

-Dave

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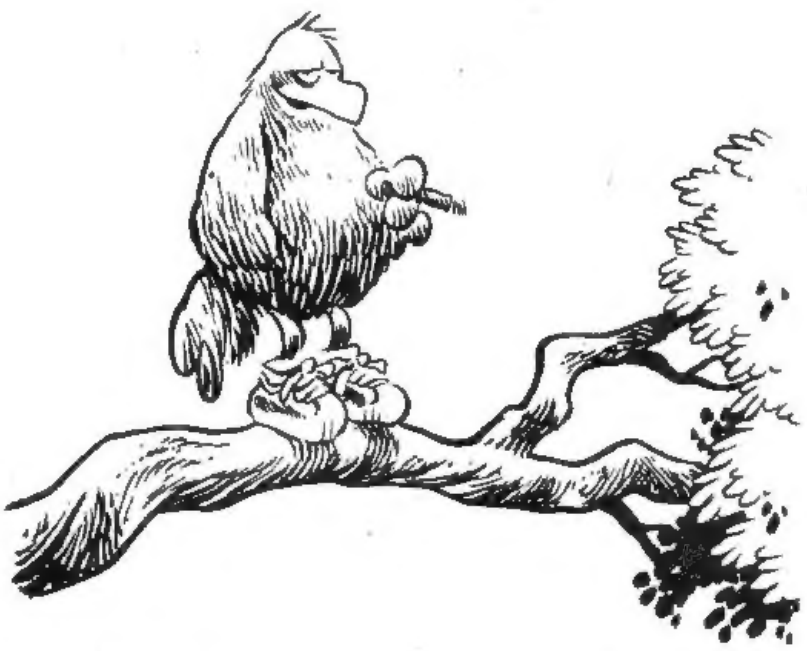

JEFF MacNELLY

What motivates an editorial cartoonist? Ask veteran cartoonist Jeff MacNelly, and he'd probably say bloodlust. MacNelly, in fact, once told NEWSWEEK that many of his colleagues might have become "hired assassins" if they hadn't learned to draw.

That's probably an overstatement. Still, MacNelly — winner of three Pulitzer Prizes and considered by many to be America's best political cartoonist — seems to revel in skewering the high and mighty. "I slander people, I libel them, I misquote them. I twist everything out of context and make them all look like lizards and reptiles. I really violate everything you're taught in journalism school," MacNelly says. "And the funny thing is, when the smoke clears, cartoonists get to the truth a lot faster than the guy who has to follow the rules."

Exposed early to both art and newsprint — his father Clarence was a portrait artist who once was publisher of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST — MacNelly cut his teeth as editorial cartoonist for THE DAILY TARHEEL at the University of North Carolina. MacNelly's schoolwork suffered accordingly; he eventually dropped out of school after flunking studio art class.

After a stint with a small weekly newspaper, MacNelly joined the Richmond (Va.) NEWS-LEADER in 1970 and won his first Pulitzer Prize there in 1972. Two more Pulitzers followed, one in 1978 and another in 1985. In addition, MacNelly has twice received the Reuben Award, top prize of the National Cartoonists Society. The 38-year-old cartoonist currently lives in Chicago, where he turns out three political cartoons a week for the CHICAGO TRIBUNE along with his daily comic strip, SHOE.

The interview that follows was excerpted from a talk MacNelly gave at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. MacNelly invited questions from the audience after

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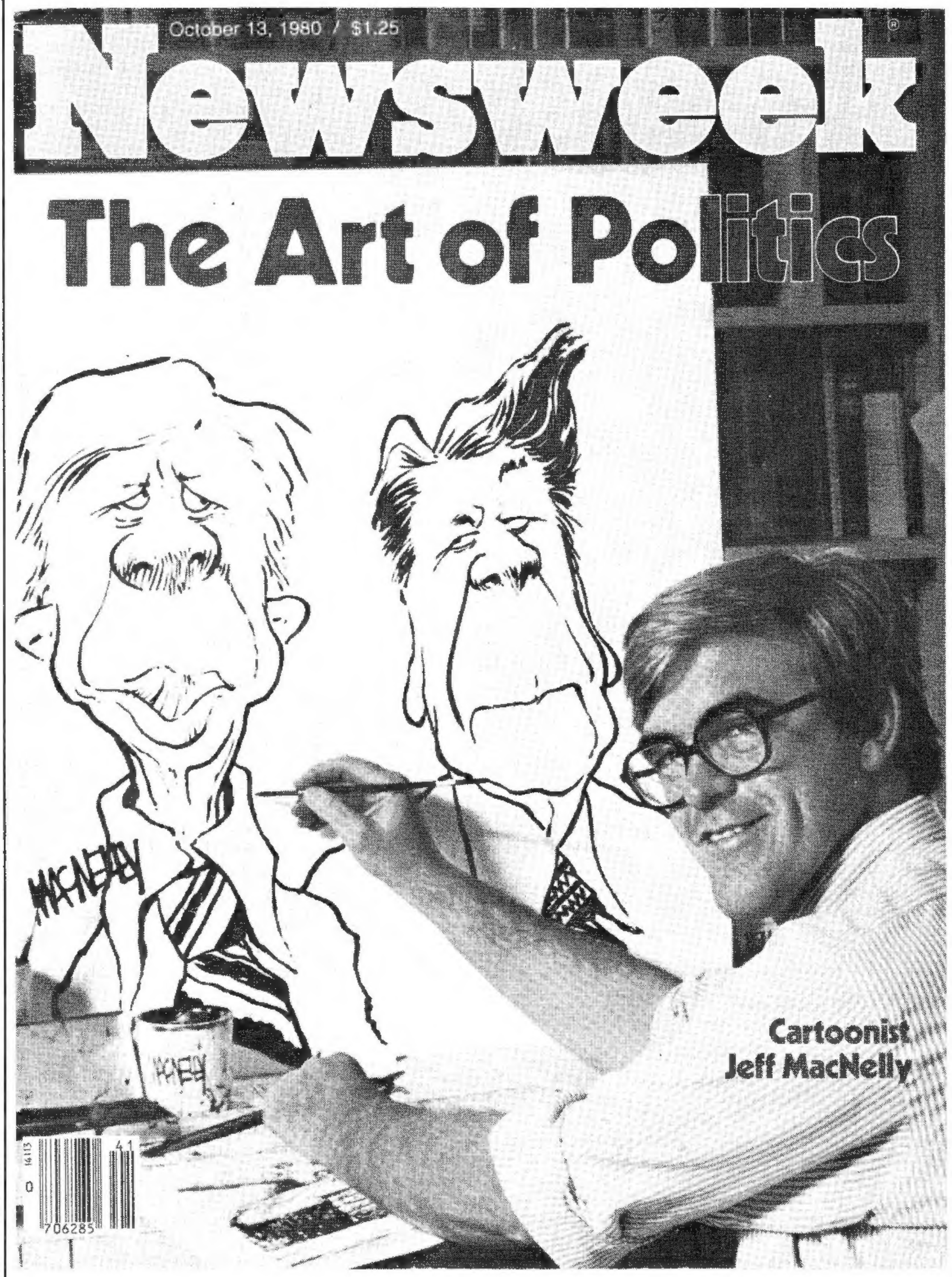
toons. I also do a comic strip.''



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JEFF MacNELLY

"I can't rely on Reagan or Tip O'Neill

Oglethorpe University Art Gallery
presents
Jeff MacNelly
an exhibition of
Shoe and Editorial Cartoons
February 3-March 14, 1986

Original art Jeff whipped up for his Atlanta talk.

his talk; some of those questions appear in this interview...

— Jim Massara

JEFF MacNELLY: Basically, what I'm doing are a bunch of political cartoons. I also do a comic strip. There are a couple of other guys who do both of these, a comic strip and a political cartoon. I have no idea why there are any more than me that do it. Sometimes it kind of gets to you. **Mike Peters** of the DAYTON DAILY NEWS does political cartoons and does MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM, the comic strip. **Doug Marlette** does political cartoons for the CHARLOTTE OBSERVER and does a thing called KUDZU and I think there are a couple of others...uh, **Bill Schorr** does CONRAD, the comic strip, also works in L.A. So there are several of us that are insane enough to do two of these things.

The political cartoon is, really, totally different from the comic strip. I use the two of them to kind of complement each other. I can do one thing with the comic strip and not be able to do it on the editorial page, and do something in the political cartoon on the editorial page that I can't do in the strip. The one great thing about a strip is you can create these ridiculous characters who end up basically being facets of yourself, and you can kind of lead them through their own silly life on their own silly planet and have fun with them, and you can comment on anything from chili dogs to pencil sharpeners that don't work to computers, whatever you want to talk about. The political cartoon, you've gotta really focus in on some of the basic issues of the day. Sometimes the strip is more fun to do than the political cartoon, and sometimes I forget what the hell I'm doing.

The comic strip is a totally different bird, a totally different animal. I mean, a lot of people wonder why I chose to do birds in the comic strip. There really wasn't any reason, until I'd been asked that question about 1,500 times by newspaper people. I finally said, "Well, if you'll notice, if you've ever seen a domesticated bird in a cage, there's a very close relationship with birds and newspapers." *(Laughter.)* So I wanted to play off this very close relationship and put the birds in the newspapers instead of all over the newspapers.

My daily routine at the TRIBUNE lends itself very well to somebody who does a comic strip. I am a member of the editorial board of the TRIBUNE. That means that, you know, when somebody's running for president, they need to talk to the TRIBUNE editorial board to explain their position — and try and keep us all awake. We have to sit, and we kind of decide what the TRIBUNE'S gonna think like the next week or so. And that's fun for me, because that's where I get all my material for my comic strip, in these meetings with editors at the CHICAGO TRIBUNE. They don't know it, but that's what happens. So I do that in the morning, and then I usually have a, on the days that a political cartoon is due, I usually manage to have about an hour and five minutes to do it in. I don't know how that works, but I do three of them a week and all three of them are at the last minute. But the great thing about working for the TRIBUNE, aside from getting great ideas for comic strips, is that it's a big enough newspaper that I can bamboozle some editor, somewhere in that

all the time. I have to come up with ideas.''

building, to send me on some ridiculous mission. Usually they can hide it in the budget somewhere. I always say that I'm working for somebody else. And what happened two weeks ago is they sent me to New Orleans, and they forced me to spend a week in New Orleans and follow the progress of the **Chicago Bears,** and then they forced me to go to the game *(laughter)*, and all that stuff. So it's a lot of fun on that side of the equation. Sometimes you really can pretend to be a real journalist and not just a guy who draws funny pictures. But the strip takes up a lot of my time, it's a lot of fun, it's totally different from this kind of thing, because, for one thing, I have to come up with the ideas. I can't rely on **Ronald Reagan** or **Tip O'Neill** all the time. I actually have to invent these things myself.

If any of you have any questions you'd like to ask about anything — the Bears, New Orleans *(Laughter.)*

AUDIENCE: *Have you ever been audited?*

JEFF: Yes, I have. In fact, the first time I did that, I enclosed a copy of that cartoon, I clipped it onto my return *(Laughter.)* And I thought I would get a form back or something. I thought I would get something that would be funny. But they didn't even acknowledge receipt of the thing. Terrible. But, yeah, I've been audited every single year since then *(Laughter)*, which is a remarkable coincidence.

AUDIENCE: *What about courts and judges? Do you go after them?*

JEFF: I go after the courts and the judges every once in a while. After all, they're only human, they screw up as much as the rest of us. I also go after the press a lot. I think we are a massive target for people like me, so every once in a while I turn the cannon around on myself. But there are a lot of Supreme Court decisions that I have bashed. That's usually fairly big news. A lot of the problem when you're doing political cartoons, though, is you have to do something that is fairly recognizable to people. You can't spend a lot of time educating them on what you're about to talk about. A columnist can write a column about, you know, the War of 1812, and he can do it next Wednesday, and he can explain to you in the column what his point is. I can't do that. I have to wait for an event and jump on it — and, basically, violate all the tenants of journalism. I slander people, I libel them, I misquote them, I twist everything out of context, and make them all look like lizards and reptiles, and I really violate everything you're taught in journalism school. I don't follow any of that stuff. I cheat. And the funny thing is, when the smoke clears, cartoonists a lot of time are getting to the truth a lot faster than the guy who has to follow the rules. Yeah?

AUDIENCE: *What limits do you set for yourself in your political cartoons?*

JEFF: The question is what limits do I put on myself. There is a limit. There's a personal-taste alarm that goes off in my head. There are a lot of things I won't do. I don't jump on First Families. I don't do the President talking to Nancy over dinner. I didn't do a lot of **Amy Carter** lemonade-stand stuff, 'cause I sort of feel like we didn't vote for them, and that's their problem, and I'm really sorry they're there, but I'm really not going to dance on their heads. But a lot of it is really personal taste. There are a lot of things that I kind of say ''Gee, that's a little too nasty or that's too mean.'' And I won't do it. Or too dirty. It'd be fun, but I'd get fired. Yeah, in the back.

AUDIENCE: *What are your politics? Where are you on the political spectrum? You seem like you must be awfully cynical.*

JEFF: You know, I don't think I'm all that cynical — the question was about where I am on the spectrum — I have always been a conservative, pretty much. That's interesting, because when I started out in this business, uh, everybody else was a liberal. It was kind of the anti-establishment position at that time, and it

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BEING A LAYMAN YOU PROBABLY CAN'T GRASP EXACTLY WHAT IT DOES.
WE CALL IT A TWO-BY-FOUR.
MACNELLY

Comics Interview

So far, there are only four titles from David Anthony Kraft's publishing company, but I like all of them.

• *MICRA* is an acronym for *M*ind *C*ontrolled *R*emote *A*utomaton. It is also one heck of a good comic book by Lamar Waldron and Ted Boonthanakit. This is a 12-issue limited series about a crippled woman who can project her consciousness into an automaton (see the title).

That is a much-too-simplified summation of a rich, complex SF novel in comic-book form. Ted's art has been compared to many different American artists (none of whose work Ted has seen; he was born in Thailand and grew up in Africa) and is remarkably clear and exciting.

Grade: A.

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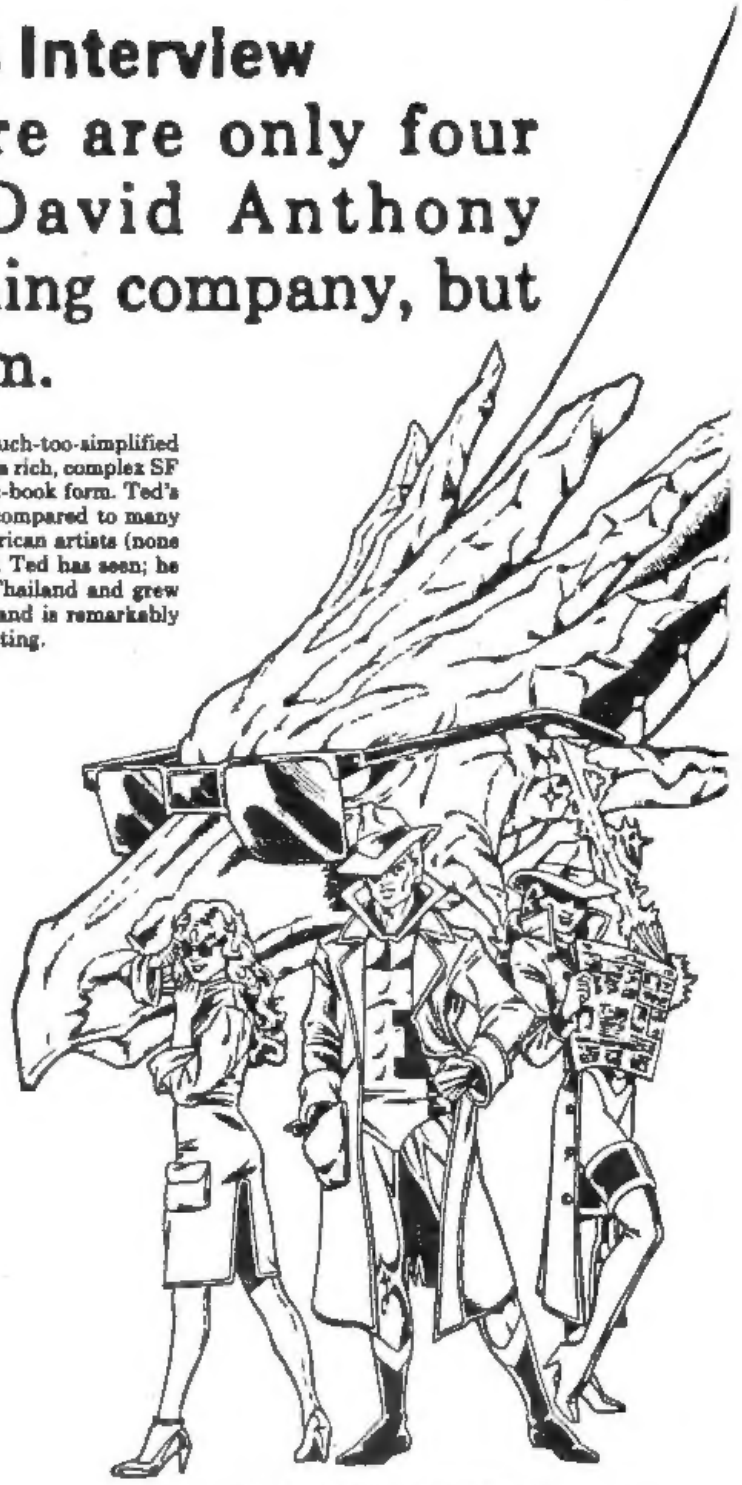
MIND CONTROLLED REMOTE AUTOMATON



• *Aristocratic X-traterrestrial Time-Traveling Thieves* (*X-Thieves* for short) has had two first issues, which is annoying to indexers and compilers of price guides, but the bright, sprightly scripts by Henry Vogel and the appropriately humorous art of Mark Propst make up for that. One of the main features of this comic book is that, like the *Mad* comic books, the panels are filled with gags, such as the crisis hotline which warns: "New universe forming — disaster imminent!"

The Southern Knights make a guest appearance in the second first issue, in which the X-Thieves steal the formula for original Coca-Cola. This is one of the best of the funny comic books (and one of the handful that really *is* funny).

Grade: A.

X-THIEVES™

SOUTHERN KNIGHTS™

• I haven't seen the last couple of issues of *Southern Knights* yet but, unless the series has gone radically downhill since #16, this is still one of the best and most original of all the supergroups. Grade: A.

• While *Comics Interview* is not a comic book, I think I can squeeze in a recommendation. This excellent publication gives a well-rounded view of the industry, with interviews with writers, pencillers, inkers, letterers, colorists, and others.

Naturally, your interest in an issue will depend on who is being interviewed, but there have been 40 issues of *Comics Interview* and no totally dull ones — not even the *G.I. Joe* issue. Grade: A.

Four titles.
Four As. Four for four. Way to go, Dave.

— Don Thompson
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A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

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"I talked to President Carter one time."

was really fun doing cartoons. It's a little trickier now because everybody claims to be a conservative. So it's not as much fun. And it's really a problem. When I go into the voting booth and vote for president, I can either vote for the guy who's going to be good for my country, or I can vote for the other guy, who's gonna be good for my business. *(Laughter.)* So it's always a terrible problem. Yeah

AUDIENCE: *How long does it take you to draw a strip?*

JEFF: Well, I can turn out two week's worth of those things — that's two Sunday pages and 12 dailies — in three weeks. *(Laughter.)* So it really keeps me jumping. I dunno, it really depends. It's a writing problem more than anything else You really have to have it right. You have to really be enthusiastic about it before you sit down and draw it. So a lot of it is beating around the bush for five or six days trying to write a week's worth. And then when it gets to the drawing part, that's the fun part. I can do that in front of a basketball game, you know, drinking a beer or something. I mean, that's kind of like writing, almost, like handwriting. The writing part is the concen tration part and the real brain part. The drawing is fun, and that's mechanical, and I can do a week's worth in a day, I guess, if I was really pushed. Yeah

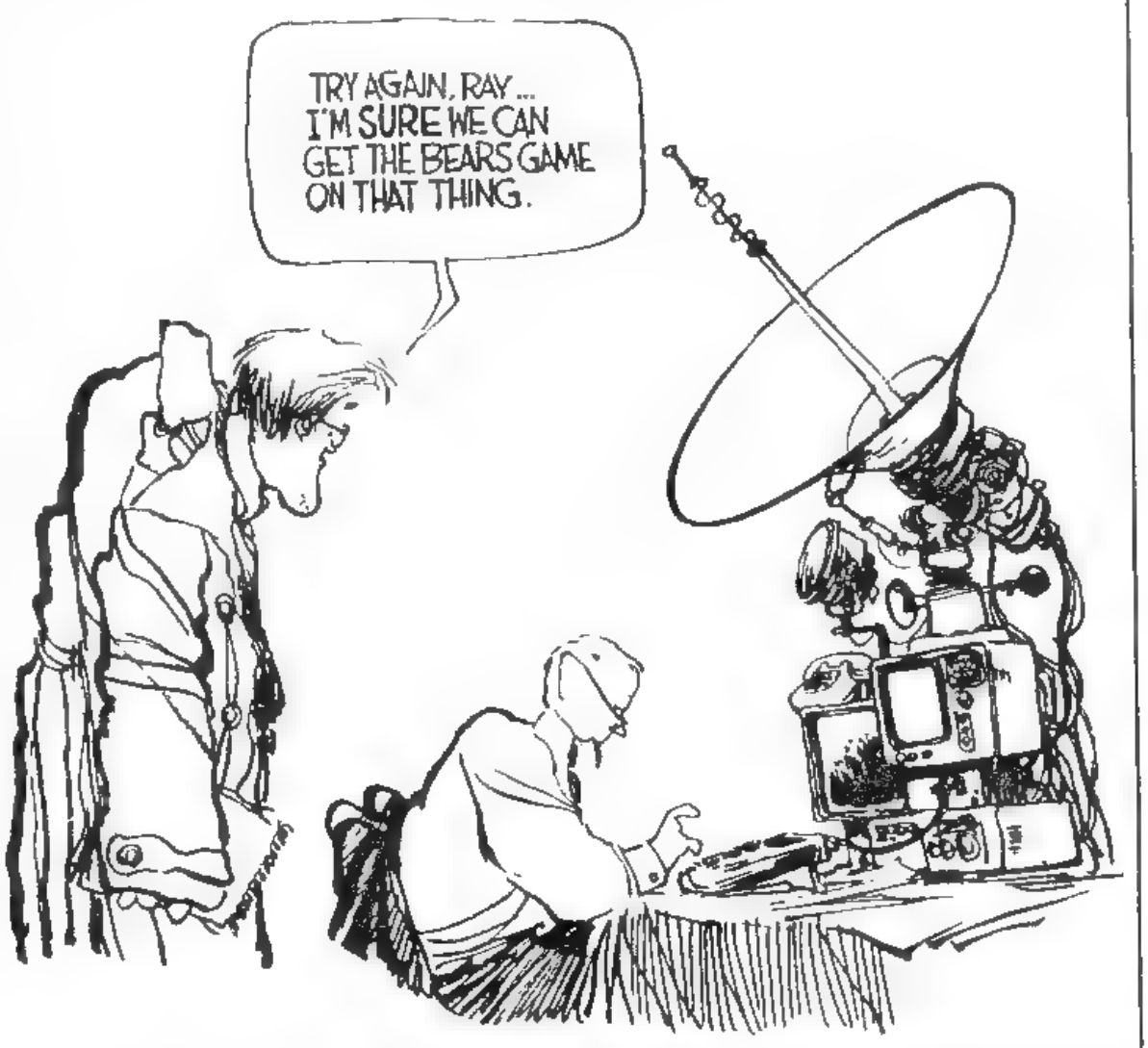
AUDIENCE: *Have you ever done a cartoon so controversial that you've had to check it with a lawyer?*

JEFF: I've gotten in trouble a couple of times. One cartoon I got in so much trouble for...my editor came down to the meeting the next morning and said, "I have not done anything in the last 24 hours except talk on the phone to people who want your head." And I said, "That's where you were. I was trying to get you all day yesterday, and the phone was busy." He said, "What did you want me for?" And I said, "I wanted to cancel my subscription." *(Laughter.)* And he said, "Why do you want to do that?" And I said, "'Cause any idiot that would run that cartoon *(Laughter.)* ...I know I drew it, but you're the idiot that actually printed it, you know. *(Laughter.)* I don't want to be associated with the thing, I don't want to read this paper anymore." So I get in trouble once in awhile. I think that's kinda for the editors. I don't worry about it. That's their problem. If it gets printed in their paper, you know, *c'est la vie. (Laughter.)* It's silly anyway. You have to prove malice in a libel case, and if it's a decent cartoon it's gonna make people laugh. Can you imagine exhibit A, they hold the cartoon up and everybody laughs? *(Laughter.)* Hardly malicious. Yes?

AUDIENCE: *Has Reagan ever made a personal call to you, like he's done for some other people?*

JEFF: No, but I've never won the Super Bowl, so...*(Laughter.)* Or the World Series, or anything like that. No, I have never talked to him. I talked to **President Carter** one time in the Oval Office, and that was when I was working for the RICHMOND NEWS-LEADER, which was really anti-**Carter**. It was writing some nasty stuff at the time. And he recognized me because I was doing some anti-**Carter** stuff at the time. He recognized me, and then he recognized the RICHMOND NEWS-LEADER and he told me...this was terrible. This was one of those times, you know, when somebody says something to you, and you think of the comeback about an hour and a half later. *(Laughter.)* He said I wasn't as bad as those editorials, but almost. *(Laughter.)*

You're talking to the president of the



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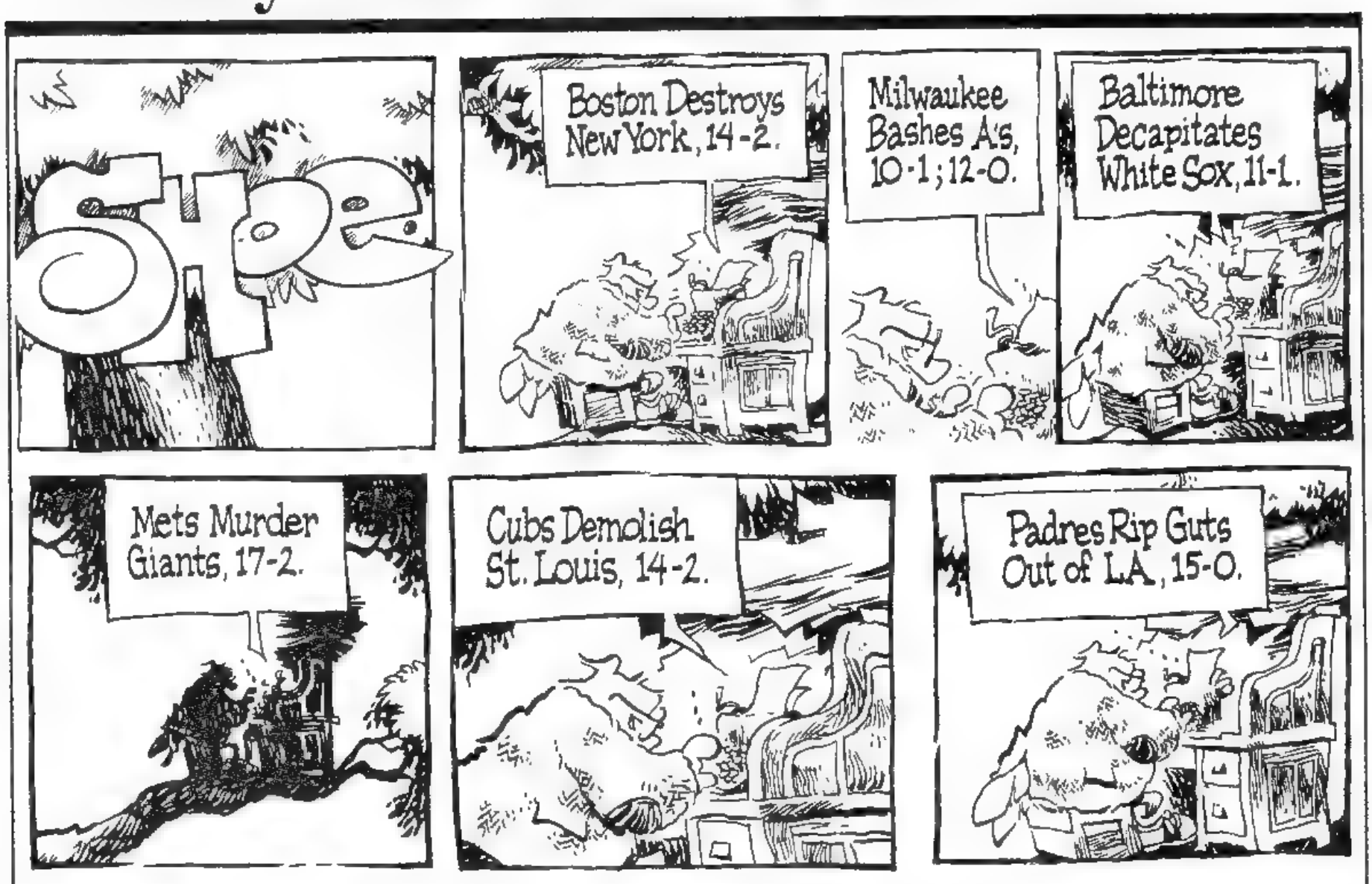
"I really think Bush is a burnout case."


Boston Destroys New York, 14-2.
Milwaukee Bashes A's, 10-1; 12-0.
Baltimore Decapitates White Sox, 11-1.
Mets Murder Giants, 17-2.
Cubs Demolish St. Louis, 14-2.
Padres Rip Guts Out of L.A., 15-0.

United States, and you don't want to kick him in the groin or anything *(Laughter)*. But...I said 'Well, thank you, Mr. President.'' And then I was driving down Interstate 95, and I said, ''If you had had any brains at all, what would you have said?'' What I should have said was ''You're not as bad as **Warren G. Harding**, but almost.'' *(Laughter.)* But anyway, I try to avoid these guys. I don't want to see them up close or get to know them, because a lot of them I end up liking. I have met some politicians, and they have a lot in common with journalists, and you end up kind of talking about the same things, and you end up liking them. And then when they pull a bone-headed move, you say, ''Wel-l-l, Ron didn't really mean that. I know him, He's a nice guy. Maybe we'll give him a day or two to recover.'' So you really want to avoid them. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: *Who do you think you'll have the most fun drawing in 1988?*

JEFF: I have no idea. They're all looking like game-show hosts now *(laughter.)*, you know. There are no ugly people anymore that are running for office. They all look like weathermen on TV and stuff. **Jack Kemp**, you know, I don't know what we're going to do with him. But that'll be fun. He's kind of a pretty boy. **George Bush** is real easy to draw, but I don't think he's going to be a factor, to tell you the truth. I don't know. I don't really care. Whoever they serve me up with. *(Laughter.)* Yeah.

AUDIENCE: *What is Jefferson Communications?*

JEFF: That's a partnership between a friend of mine and I. Sounds like a clever name for my own corporation. It's not. I wish it were, but it's not my own. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: *If Bush won't be the Republican candidate in '88, then who will it be?*

JEFF: Oh, I don't know. Probably **Kemp**, I guess. But there's so many factors, you just can't tell. I don't know. I really think **Bush** is a burnout case. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: *You said earlier you weren't cynical. Then what is the idealistic side of your political cartoons?*

JEFF: Oh, I got sort of teary eyed. I still do cornball cartoons. And I try to avoid that, because it really isn't what we're about, usually, but they're the ones I usually get the most response about. I did

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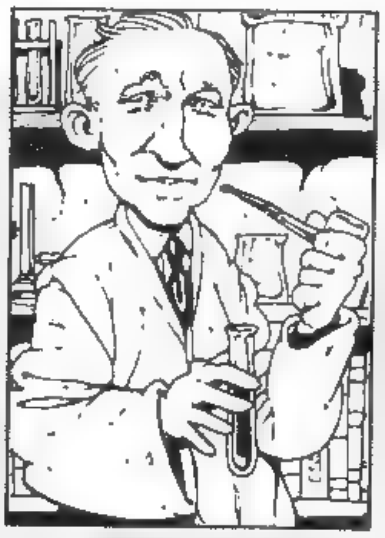

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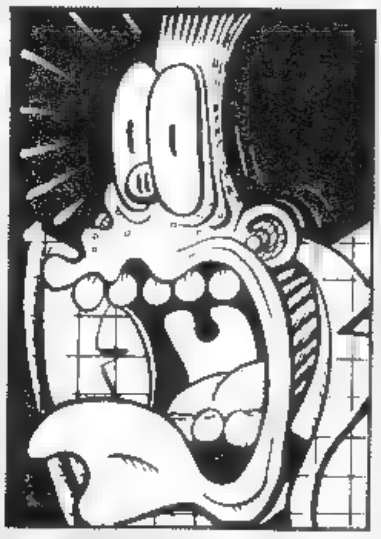

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At Fantagraphics Books, Comics Isn't A Commodity. It's An Art.

"You can't say 'bleep' in a family paper."

a couple on the shuttle about a week and a half ago — the first one of which, I have to tell you about. It got me so mad I left the office at 9:15 and said I was never coming back to the CHICAGO TRIBUNE. I did a drawing of the Spirit of St. Louis, and it was from a painting, a beautiful painting, of the Spirit of St. Louis flying off toward the horizon. And I did the shuttle blasting off in the background, you know, sort of on the horizon going up in space. The title of it was "The Pathfinders," or something. Well, I am so much into aircraft that I put every detail into every airplane I ever draw. This was after the Super Bowl, of course, like on the Wednesday, I suppose, this is when this ran. The name of the company that built the Spirit of St. Louis is Ryan Aircraft, and I just kind of gently wrote in "Ryan" and the name of the Spirit of St. Louis — 'cause whenever you don't do that you get a call from a wise guy airplane-modeling nut who will tell you that you're wrong. So I put in every detail. It was absolutely perfect. It said "Ryan" on the tail. Well, several people called up that morning, as soon as I got to the office, and yelled at me, "How dare you equate the shuttle tragedy with the fact that the **Philadelphia Eagles** have hired **Buddy Ryan** (a coach) away from the **Chicago Bears?"** And I got so mad, I left. I said, "They don't deserve cartoons that have any sensitivity in them at all. I'm leaving." So I did that one, and I did one the next day, really, in a classroom. It was really cornball, but that's the sort of idealistic stuff I do every once in a while. I get kind of carried away. Tearjerker stuff. I tend not to be all that cynical. I'm fairly optimistic, even about the Russians,

which shows you how unrealistic I probably am. Yeah

AUDIENCE: *Did you ever have a cartoon rejected or changed?*

JEFF: Yeah, I did. I've never had a confrontation, though. I'm not one of those people. I had a strip turned down one time because it involved cockroaches or something, and the editor at the syndicate had had a bad week or something, he had a terrible stomach problem at the time. He said, "I can't stand another cockroach in my comic strips. This is a family newspaper. We've gotta have something in here that is wholesome, and you're putting cockroaches in blenders. I don't understand. *(Laughter.)* Do something that's suitable for a family newspaper. We can't send this out." I said, "No problem." So I sat down and I did a new strip. In it the Perfessor and Shoe...the Perfessor says, "Here's my column for tomorrow," and Shoe reads it and says, "Look, this is a family newspaper *(Laughter)* , we can't run this in our paper." And the Perfessor says, "Why not?" and Shoe says, "You can't say..." — and there's a descriptive four-letter word that he says — "You can't say 'bleep' in a family newspaper." And I wrote the four-letter word and sent it out like that, as sort of a joke *(Laughter.)* . Of course, you know what happened. The editor says, "Here's the new one from **MacNelly,**" like this *(pantomines throwing it aside without looking at it). (Laughter.)* And it really proved a point. It proved that, you know, he was pushed around that day, so he decided he'd call me and push me around. And it didn't matter what I sent him — and it sure didn't. I called him two days later, I said, "How'd you like that one?" "Hey great thanks a lot for doing that." *(Laughter.)* "Where is it now, Don?" "Oh, it's in Buffalo." We've got time for about two more now. A lot of you are getting antsy here, eyes are glazing over. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: *Who's your favorite cartoonist?*

JEFF: I claim dead cartoonists, because people will never disagree with me and I won't upset anybody. But **Walt Kelly** really is my hero. He did POGO. If you know POGO and you know my strip, you know, you can see that. And that was back in the days when you could actually write entire sentences in comic strips and not run into the next guy's comic strip. *(Laughter.)* That was back when they were printing them, back before they were printing them like airmail stamps. I would say he's the lead star in the constellation. Uh, yeah

AUDIENCE: *What do you think of BLOOM COUNTY?*

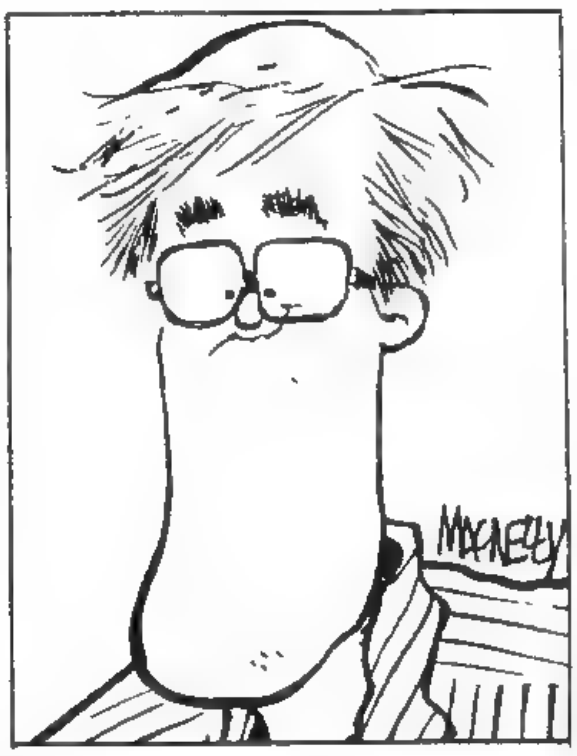
JEFF: I like BLOOM COUNTY. I think it's great. I think **Berke Breathed** is a master with the dialog and stuff. He's got a great sense of timing and rhythm. I like it — although I do recognize a bird in a swivel chair with a typewriter. It's kinda familiar. *(Laughter.)* There was one over here.

AUDIENCE: *Is there a book of your political cartoons out? If there is, I haven't seen it. Is there one?*

JEFF: Yeah, there is, but it's in the "rare books" section. *(Laughter.)* I don't know where it is. It came out, like, last May and disappeared without a trace. I don't know why they were, why they put it out if they weren't going to promote it, but apparently they had a grudge against some trees in the Northwest. *(Laughter.)* It's called DIRECTIONS, and I'm gonna put out a bigger one fairly soon, so save your money.

I want to thank you all. You've been a good audience. Thank you.

A self-portrait by MacNelly.



"I inked the WEB OF SPIDER-MAN AN-

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I first met Art Adams at a rather dead convention in Houston, Texas, a while back. He was quietly sitting behind a table, his long red hair brushed out of his face, wearing a Flaming Carrot T-Shirt, and drawing a picture of Gumby.

He was someone I had to talk to

Before the night was over, we had gathered a group of people and hit such renowned Houston hot spots as the House of Pies (don't even ask), the Ale House (where we dodged off Texas-sized roaches), and a local haunted house (where Art swears he saw his brother). A good time.

Then, at the last Dallas Fantasy Fair, I spotted a red crop of hair and a Gumby T-shirt (he has quite a collection). Of course, it was Art. Just talking to him again, I realized he was a darn nice guy who really liked what he did, so I cornered him for an interview. And perhaps because we have the same birthday, or because of those fights with Texas roaches, or maybe just because I nagged him enough, he agreed.

It's difficult to get Art to speak about himself — he spices his talk with sound effects, jokes and anecdotes, instead. But it's obvious he has a lot inside; it comes through in his work, and maybe a little comes through in this interview. But, let me tell you, getting this guy to pose for pictures is another story...

RENEE WITTERSTAETTER: *When you were in high school, is that when you decided to be a comic artist?*

ART ADAMS: Actually, for about a year in high school, I wanted to be an actor. My parents said "Well, you better have a second thing to fall back on, Art...comics might not be okay."

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Arthur Adams
Born: 5 April 1963
Residence: Oakland, California
Occupation: Comic-book artist and nice guy
Credits: LONGSHOT, X-MEN CLASSIC covers, NEW MUTANTS SPECIAL, NEW MUTANTS ANNUAL, CLOAK AND DAGGER, WEB OF SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL, MARVEL FANFARE, LONGSHOT GRAPHIC NOVEL, GUMBY.
Favorite Comic: THE FLAMING CARROT
Hobbies: Collecting stuff (especially monster stuff), and walking.
Goals Yet To Be Achieved: To draw every character he loved as a kid!

RENEE: *They thought acting was more secure?*

ART: No, I don't think they did, but it was a second choice anyway.

RENEE: *What were your favorite comics? What were your inspirations?*

ART: What started me out...I had always liked comics, but I had never seriously thought about drawing them. Then I picked up the first issue of the MICRONAUTS by **Mike Golden** and said, "Wow, I could do this! This looks like fun." That's what got me going. Other influences...**Walt Simonson**...gosh, there's just lots of people, movies, TV shows I've watched over the years. Just everything in my head comes out on the page in a hideous gob of lines. About the only comic I read now is the FLAMING CARROT.

RENEE: *How would you describe your style?*

ART: I couldn't describe it. People keep on asking me about it...people who want to be artists. That's something that you can't do...tell them how to develop a style It's just something that happens. I don't think much about my work when I do it...I just sit down and do it.

RENEE: *Does it seem to come naturally to you?*

ART: I guess it does. I've never gone to school or anything. And things seem to be working out okay that way.

RENEE: *I've heard comments that peo-*

ART ADAMS

NUAL and I'll be inking my GUMBY stuff."

"Before LONGSHOT, I'd never drawn

ple see a lot of humor in your style. Is that something you strive for?

ART: I suppose it is. My viewpoint just comes right through. Comic books are pretty silly, so there might as well be something light-hearted about it all.

RENEE: *Can you give me some examples of your humor?*

ART: Sometimes I put throw-away characters in the backgrounds. . .regular cartoon characters, like Gumby or Popeye. In the NEW MUTANTS SPECIAL there's one panel where Bobbie is sitting on a table; in the background, there is a crowd, and for no good reason whatsoever, right behind Bobbie, I drew clearly Wimpy and Goofy. Just like they were supposed to be there. Those were removed, but most of the other things stay in. I have a lot of fun with Warlock just because he's such an innocent kind of character. Longshot, too. . .just very innocent characters that come across situations and I draw silly faces because they are confused.

RENEE: *I've seen the "Pokey" panel button. How did that come about, and had Art Clokey seen it?*

ART: I'll probably be in trouble, but it's really Marvel's problem. I put the Enterprise in the X MEN ANNUAL, and that's still in. The only thing the legal department made me take out was Wimpy and Goofy. Let's see, I wrote that line "Pokey" and I wrote the "Ed Grimley" stuff. I think **Chris Claremont** changed it slightly. As long as they aren't a major part of the story involved and aren't featured on the cover, it's okay. That's what I was told

RENEE: *Where do you get those smiles that you draw?*

ART: It's just something that happens. It's one of those things you can't plan. It started when I started drawing comics. Comic books are, like, the best place to learn how to draw things. I'd never drawn a person smiling before LONGSHOT#1. I'd never drawn a windmill, I'd never drawn a baby, and when you draw comics you have to draw backgrounds, you have to draw different-sized people, you have to draw emotions. Mostly, I was just drawing simple pin-up things. So comic books are a good place to learn

RENEE: *Did you expect this learning process? Is comic work what you thought it would be?*

ART: I half-way expected it, and I've always been a pretty fast learner, so I figured once I get to it, I'll do it. And I knew LONGSHOT didn't have any serious kind of schedule. So I didn't feel intimidated, like I had to learn especially fast. So far, it's all been a learning process. That's mostly why I haven't taken on a regular book, because I haven't felt I knew enough. I'm just reaching the point now where I feel I can do a regular book. I want to wait until after the LONGSHOT GRAPHIC NOVEL, so I'll have something that's all mine, and then I'll go ahead and start cranking stuff out.

RENEE: *You'll be doing most of the work on the graphic novel?*

ART: I'll be inking and coloring it, too. The closest thing you can compare it to is **Art Suydam's** stuff. That's what I'm picturing in my mind. It may turn out looking completely different, simply because I'm not as talented as **Mr. Suydam,** but that's what I'm picturing in my head. . .lots of muted colors. It's all going to be set on Longshot World, so it should be pretty nasty looking I'm thinking **Giger.**

RENEE: *What's your favorite character of those you've done?*

ART: I can't say I really have a favorite. Warlock might be the one that immediately comes to mind, just because when I draw him, he can be whatever I want him to be.

RENEE: *Is Warlock more trouble to draw?*

ART: Not really. Even if he is, he's a lot of fun, so I don't notice if he's taking forever He doesn't really have a skull, so you don't have to worry about the shape of his head. You just try to make him expressing some kind of emotion, but in a cartoon sort of way

RENEE: *When you do page breakdowns, are they tight or loose. . .or does it really matter?*

ART: When I did the LONGSHOT series breakdowns, I did those pretty tight. I'm working on a Longshot story now for MARVEL FANFARE. . .I guess I had better back up a bit. This FANFARE story I got a year ago, when **Ann Nocenti** and I decided to do our LONGSHOT GRAPHIC NOVEL, because I said, "Well, Ann, I want to do it in this particular type of way, but I need something to practice on and see if I can do it, so write me a short story 12 or 15 pages long." She did, and I read it about a year ago and I thought nothing of it, because I wasn't planning to start on it right away. I started it about a month ago and re-read it and said, "Oh, nothing happens. This is just a thing." I had to make up a story around this episode she had written, so I had to do very tight breakdowns, because it was supposed to be originally 15 pages and it ended up being about 30 pages just to figure out what was going on.

On the GUMBY book, **Bob Burden** did thumbnail roughs for it, and I re-broke those down, but those were pretty loose. Usually my breakdowns for myself are pretty loose. If they have to be approved by someone else, then they're tight.

RENEE: *Are you a fast worker?*

ART: Yeah. It was a lot of fun. Cannonball. . .his helmet was from a little G. I. Joe figure called Sci-Fi. That's the only thing I didn't make up. The rest of it's mine

RENEE: *We enjoyed that.*

ART: Well, thank you. Buy more copies and I'll get more money. Or you can give me a couple of cents now. It's up to you.

RENEE: *Your machines look like those of artists who like to draw hardware. . .yet you don't seem to have that at all*

ART: I don't really love hardware but, when I do it, I want it to look good. I want it to look functional, at least. But I don't

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a windmill, never drawn a baby."

fear it, either. If it's required. . .I draw it. If it's not. . .I don't

RENEE: *You do a lot of covers. Does it take more than a day to do a cover?*

ART: Yeah. I'm real intimidated by covers. I keep on being asked to do them, and I don't know why. I have no cover sense. I just fill them up. I can tell a story okay, but when it comes to a single illustration, it's a lot more intimidating, so I'll usually take two or three days on that.

RENEE: *You've been doing other types of work, too. . .I noticed your Wolverine Stand-up.*

ART: **Janet Jackson** asked me to do that, and I did an OVERSTREET PRICE GUIDE cover. They also asked me to do a Star Comics ad. . .which I turned down.

RENEE: *Is there anything that you regret turning down?*

ART: If I'm offered a story and I don't want to do it, I turn it down and don't think anymore about it. But **Ralph Macchio** did ask me to draw DAREDEVIL a while ago, and I kind of wanted to do that, but I had other things to do. **Ann Nocenti** is writing it now. That would have been a lot of fun. I like working with her.

RENEE: *How hard is it to motivate yourself, working at home?*

ART: Like I was saying, if I have plenty of money in the bank, it's difficult. I can always find something more interesting to do. . .not that I don't like my job or anything. Once I get working on it, I find it pretty interesting. . .but I can usually find some way to waste my time, too.

RENEE: *What have you done for companies other than Marvel?*

ART: I haven't done a lot. Actually, my first published work in comics was a pinup in CAPTAIN CARROT #12 for which I was paid $10. And I did 8 pages of Batman for BATMAN #400. I'm now working on an ACTION COMICS ANNUAL which will feature Superman and Batman.

RENEE: *Any chance of you doing any more Batman?*

ART: Not for awhile. Most of the things I'm interested in at DC are the **Kirby** things. . .the DEMON, things like that. I'd dearly love the DEMON.

RENEE: *What do you think of Matt Wagner's DEMON?*

ART: Ugh. I usually like Matt's stuff. I was really disappointed in the DEMON. I knew he was going to do a lot of stuff. I don't know how it reads I don't like the way it looks. Sorry, Matt

RENEE: *Does the comic HIGH ANXIETY mean anything to to you?*

ART: Ah, I think I was 18 when I did that. I did it all in a week. They asked me to do a story and said they had a writer and

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Frank Miller tackled the Dark Knight.*
John Byrne grappled with the Man of Steel.*

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"I've been paid. . . I've had my fun."

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a title. Then the publishers called back and said the writer left, so I had to do the story around the title. It sounds funnier than it was. It's really ugly. Eek.

I also did an ALIEN WORLDS 3-D special for Pacific Comics, right after LONGSHOT #1. That was strange. That was the first time I worked from a full script, and I can't say I enjoyed it. It told me how many panels to put on a page and what angle and how to draw it. I prefer working a little looser, even though I'm now working from **Bob Burden**'s thumbnails. . . but Bob is a genius. And I'm also supposed to do a Juda Macabee story for First. Just a little back-up. That will be nice. It's Juda Macabee goes to a planet and fights sharks and pirates.

RENEE: *What do you think of Steve Rude's work?*

ART: He's great. I could never draw like him so I'm kind of intimidated by the idea of drawing a character he created. It'll be one of those things like when I was doing NEW MUTANTS and I looked at Warlock. . . the way he was being drawn then. . . and said, "I can never draw that way, I won't even try." That's how I feel about **Rude's** stuff. There's no point in trying to draw that way. It would come out a mess. I prefer drawing my style, anyway. If you're going to try to copy someone when doing a fill-in issue, what's the point.

RENEE: *Do you consider Marvel a jealous company?*

ART: People up there know I'm doing GUMBY for Comico and the only reaction I've had is, "Gosh, we're anxious to see that. We're curious to see what you're going to do." I've always worked for Marvel, but I've never considered myself a Marvel artist. I'm a freelance artist. I've worked for whoever was willing to pay my price.

RENEE: *Would you ever consider signing a contract with one company?*

ART: Yeah, I would, if I was doing a regular book.

RENEE: *Would it be with Marvel?*

ART: Probably with Marvel right now. . . but that may change, there's no telling. I'm thinking about getting a regular book, but I don't know what it would be.

RENEE: *I guess the character offered has a lot to do with that?*

ART: It would probably be a spur of the moment thing. I've never planned anything in my career. I've just found someone calls and says, "Do you want to do this?" and I say "yes" or "no." That's what I do. I really don't think much in advance.

An Art Adams/Terry Austin page from BATMAN #400.

RENEE: *Is there any one character you look forward to drawing someday?*

ART: I look forward to the characters I liked as a kid. . . which is just about all of them. I'd like to draw them all, one day. But I don't have any one favorite I'd like to do. I'm afraid if I say one, I'll be drawing it for the rest of my life.

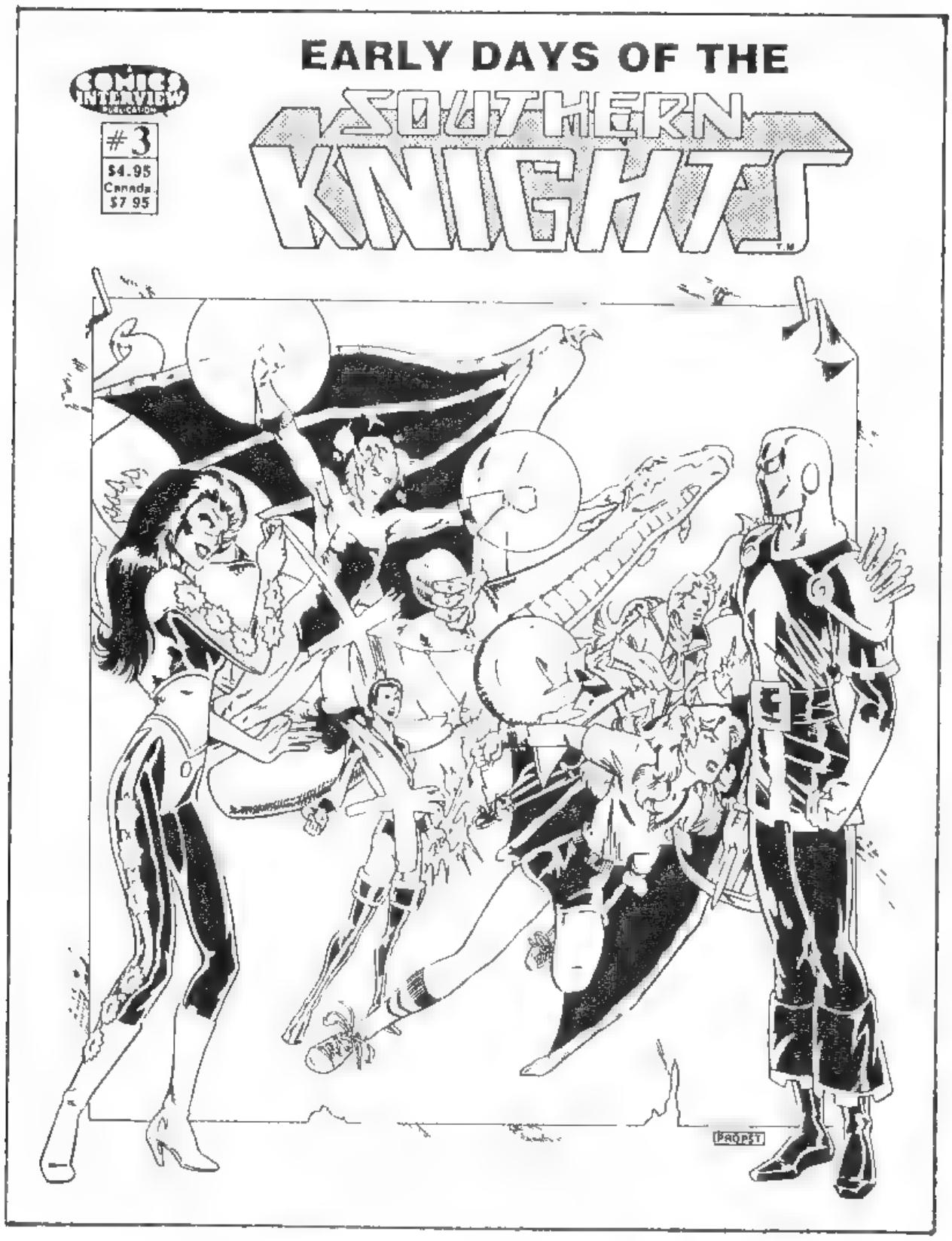
RENEE: *Let's talk about the quality of artwork. . . how it looks when it leaves your hands, and when it ends up in the book. How do you feel about the quality of reproduction in comics?*

ART: Ugh. It's pretty ugly. I've gotten to the point where, once I pencil a page, I send it away and figure it's gone, it's done, I'll never see it again. Whatever happens to it. . . oh well, I've been paid. . . I've had my fun. I don't have to worry about it anymore

RENEE: *Have you ever been happy with the way a finished page looked?*

ART: There're a few pages I was happy with. The only book I was really appalled by was the WEB OF SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL, which was just very ugly. It printed, like, all gray. And, for some reason, the colorist decided that hard yellow was the best color he could use through the whole book. . . so it's just yellow and gray. Really ugly.

RENEE: *Is there a piece of work that you feel printed particularly well?*



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"Shooter said 'There is no Marvel style."

ART: I can't think of any, but the LONGSHOT GRAPHIC NOVEL is supposed to print well. I'm looking forward to it. I've never worried much about printing. I just do my work and it's done. Maybe I ought to worry more, but I don't

RENEE: *Speaking of color, how do you feel about black-and-white comics?*

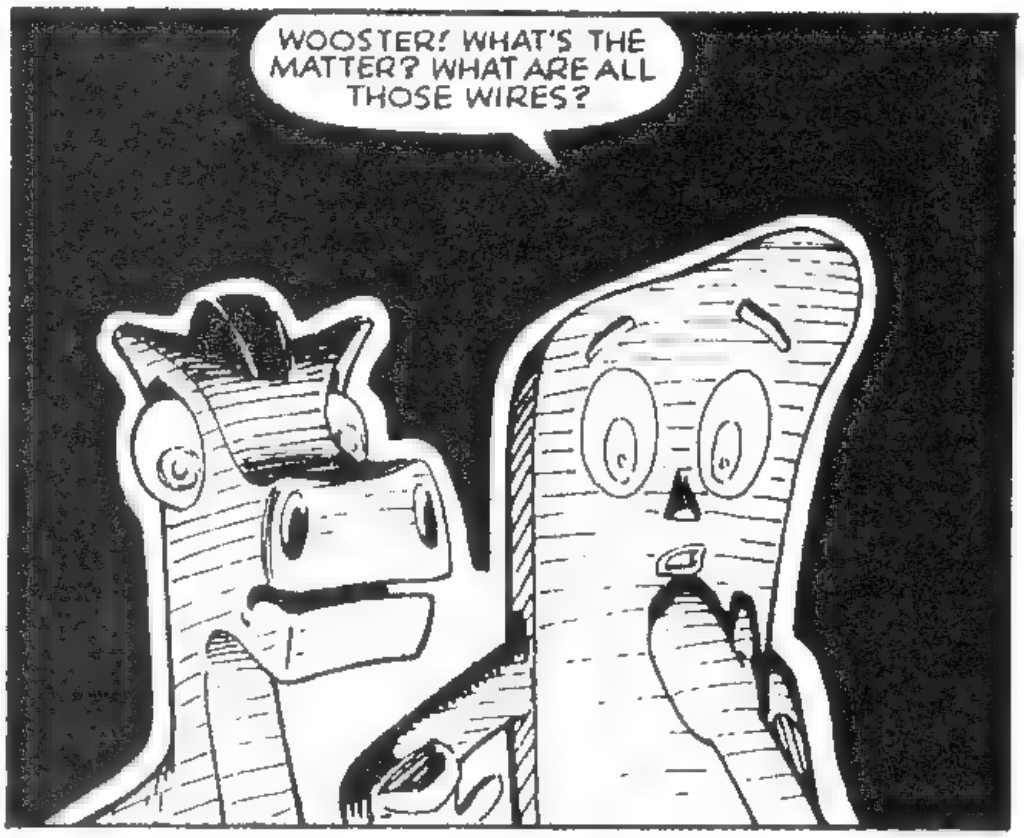
ART: I like black-and-white comics. I've always preferred my stuff in black-and-white. I usually put so many tiny things on a page that, once it gets colored, it's just invisible. Like **Mike Golden's** THE NAM, right now. The coloring on it has been so . . . it's printed badly. The colorist is picking nice colors, but they get to the printing plant and they put really hard colors on it so you can't see the little lines It just disappears. They turn into big purple shapes or something.

RENEE: *Do you have a favorite inker you like to work with?*

ART: I've had good luck with inkers. And again, I haven't done enough work to know for sure. **Terry Austin** inked a lot of my work and I guess he'll ink more. He's real good. **Craig Russell**, who's been inking a couple of the X-MEN CLASSIC covers . . . he's great. He inks me the way I picture in my head that I should ink myself, but I'm not capable of doing it.

RENEE: *Most of us have heard of a so-called Marvel style. Has your art ever been affected by that?*

ART: The only thing that's been changed that I can remember offhand was one X-MEN CLASSIC cover. They took some black out of the background that I put in. I haven't had too much trouble. When I



first started working for them, **Jim Shooter** said, "I know you've heard about Marvel style. There's no such thing. All we want is clear storytelling, powerful storytelling. We can suggest to you those who are the best at such things" . . . which is always **Jack Kirby** or **Gil Kane** or someone like that. But he also said, "We don't want you to draw it this way. We just want you to tell strong stories." Inking may be a different thing. I understand there are some rules on inks. But, when I run across rules, I go, "Oh, I don't have to worry about that.

RENEE: *So you've never done any inking?*

ART: I've inked some of my own stuff. The WEB OF SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL. I'll be inking GUMBY and the LONGSHOT GRAPHIC NOVEL and the FANFARE story. That's about all

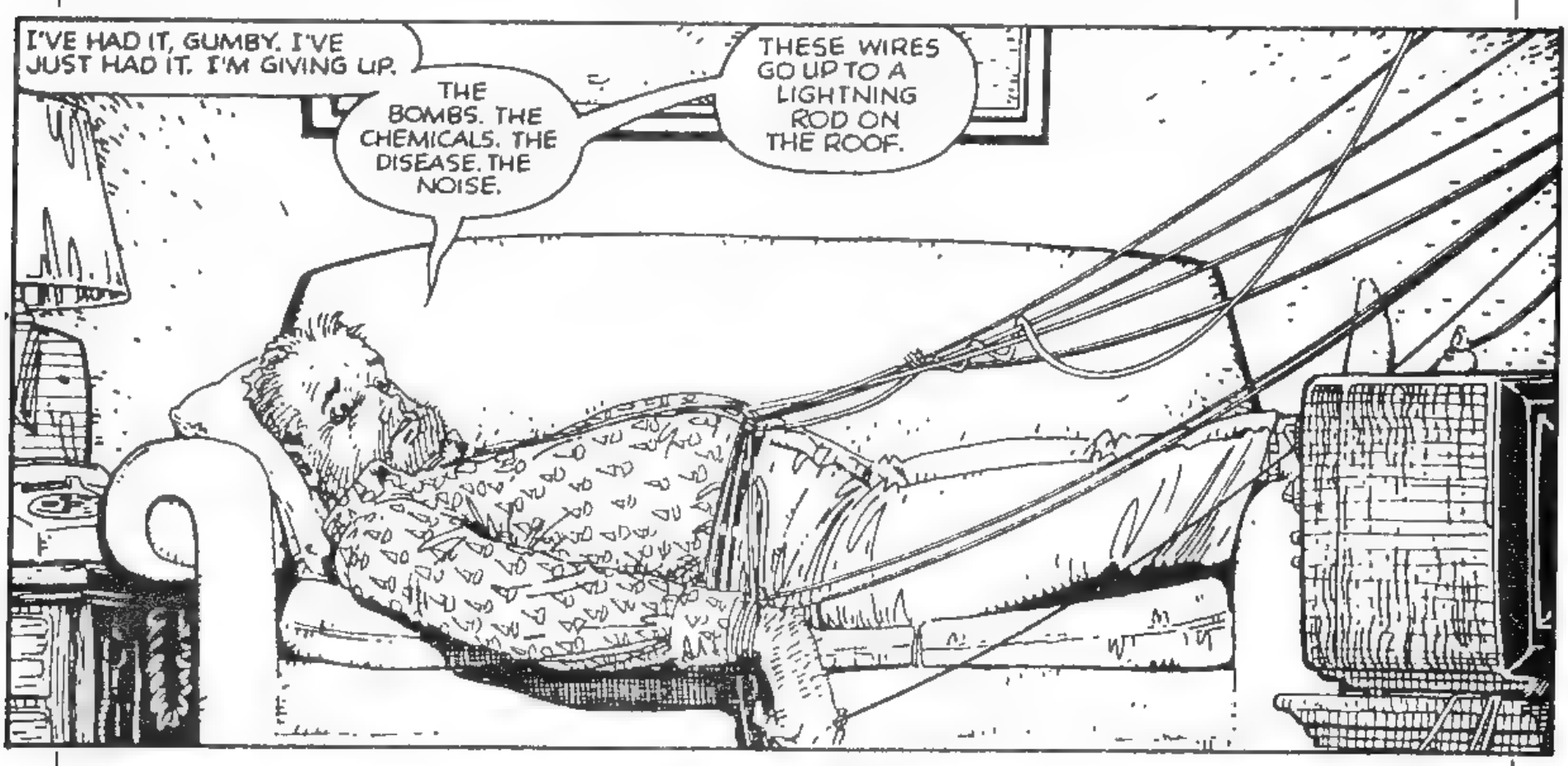
RENEE: *How do you feel about drawing and inking your own stuff?*

ART: The inking is a little bit more like real work. I pencil so tight, I really don't have to worry about being messed up or anything. It'll be basically what I want. There is just different line quality for better inkers or worse inkers.

RENEE: *Can you tell us how collaboration with writer Bob Burden on the GUMBY one-shot from Comico came about.*

ART: Oh dear, maybe shouldn't tell it. You won't tell anyone, will you? Actual-

Gumby TM & © 1987 Art Clokey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"I'm having a lot of fun with Gumby."

Gumby TM & © 1987 Art Clokey

ly, **Diana Schutz** at Comico called up and said, "We'd like you to do a Gumby comic and we'd like **Mark Evanier** to write it." And I said, "Oh." In my mind, I said, "I really don't want to do this. I know I'm going to be connected to Gumby all my life if I do this." So I said, "Gosh, maybe if you got **Bob Burden**," knowing that that would never happen. Diana said, "We'll see." The next day she called back with "Bob would love to do it." Oh well, I guess I'm doing Gumby. And I'm glad. I had a different idea about Gumby. The only thing I knew about Gumby was the **Eddie Murphy** skits on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE. And then I got Bob's plot and Gumby is just a swell little character. He's just an innocent little kid. He and Pokey run around going, "Let's have fun," and they run across the weirdest people. It's great.

RENEE: *So you feel the collaboration is going well?*

ART: Yeah. I'm having a lot of fun.

RENEE: *Do you have artistic license with the characters, to a certain extent?*

ART: Someone was talking to me about character sheets yesterday, and I told them I got a lot of sheets from **Art Clokey** and it had lots of drawings of Gumby and Pokey and said, "Approved by **Art Clokey**. Follow Strictly." Those went in the drawer. I won't be looking at those

RENEE: *How does Clokey feel about that?*

ART: I don't know. I haven't talked to him. He approved of the one ad I did and that was about as far from the character sketches as could be. The actual book will be a little closer to the sketches, so he should be happier.

RENEE: *What differences are you making in the characters?*

ART: The biggest difference I can tell you is that Gumby has teeth. That's about it. He's still a pretty straight character. He's maybe a little more flexible looking than in other things. Maybe not. I'm not familiar with other Gumby material.

RENEE: *Why did you want to put that change in?*

ART: Just to make the book more readable. I didn't want a static-looking figure.

RENEE: *Does showing teeth give you more facial expression?*

ART: Yeah. I'm giving him plenty of bizarre expressions. Not so much bizarre. . . maybe I should say, more extreme. He can scream and stuff, or just go "O."

RENEE: *Why did Comico ask you to do this project?*

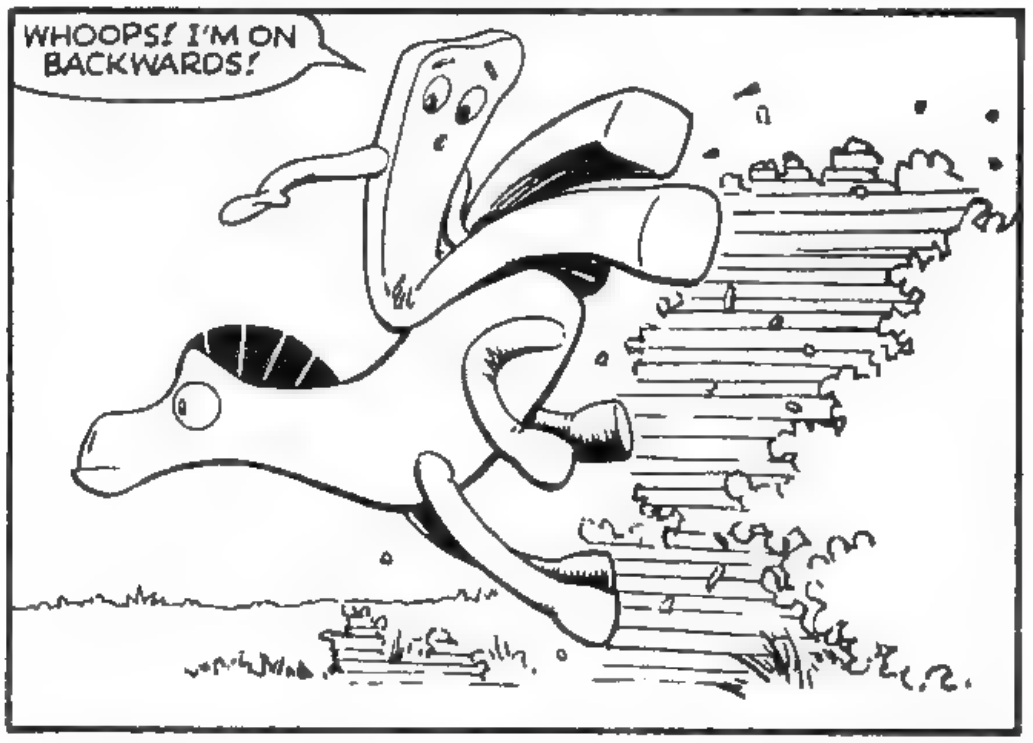
ART: Well, I knew Diana when she was in Berkeley. I used to go to the comic-book shop that she worked at. I've known Diana for about four years now. She knew that when I was doing LONGSHOT, I did little Gumby sketches at the top of each page in one whole issue. So as soon as she found it was possible to do a GUMBY comic, she wanted me to do it. Or so she says. Bob and I may try to get a contract to do one GUMBY book a year.

RENEE: *Are there other writers, besides Burden, who you would like to work with?*

ART: I'd like to work with **Walt Simonson**. That will happen someday. I would love to do that. I don't know about **Alan Moore**. He might write a little too tight for me. I mean, you can read **Moore** on anybody. . . it doesn't have to be my stuff. . and you'll enjoy it just as much. Walt may be about the only guy. **Louise Simonson**, maybe. That's it.

RENEE: *Do you read WATCHMEN?*

ART: I think I read up to issue #3 or #4 and I have the rest at home. I just haven't

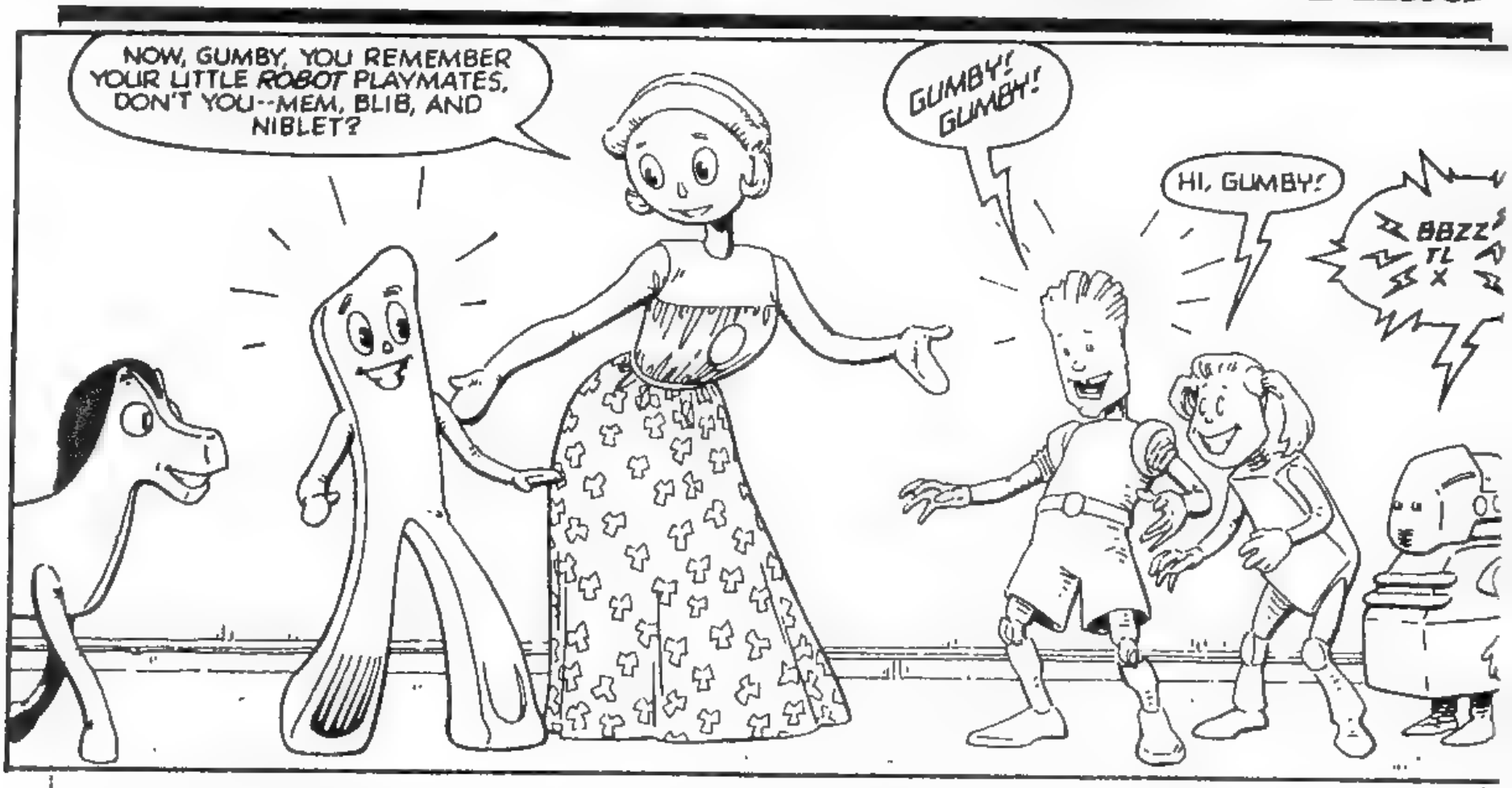


"The biggest difference I can tell you is that Gumby has teeth." From the upcoming GUMBY full-color book by Comcio.

© 1986 MCG

ART ADAMS

"I hated CLOAK AND DAGGER. If I had



picked them up yet. I like **Dave Gibbons'** stuff a lot. I think he draws really well. Really tight

RENEE: *Would you ever like to do CONAN? Your art Style would lend itself nicely to something like that.*

ART: Yes. I would love to do CONAN. Actually, I asked **Louise Simonson**. . .well, this isn't CONAN. . .to write me a RED SONJA graphic novel. I don't think she took me seriously, so she's probably not doing it. But yeah, I would love to draw **Conan** some day, but I wouldn't draw it the way it's being drawn. When I was a kid I loved the **Robert E. Howard** Conan stories and **Robert E. Howard** made Conan wear pants. . .so I'd have to change it a little bit. He wouldn't wear his fur shorts anymore. I hate those. He'd look a lot different. He'd be closests to **Barry Smith's** CONAN. But Barry did it once in "Red Nails," too. I picked it up and said, "Gosh, this is beautiful. But Conan's not wearing red pants." He was supposed to wear the same kind of suit Vallario was wearing. That might have looked funny. . .but then, it was supposed to be funny. That would have been okay

RENEE: *I heard you mention that you have an offer to do some writing?*

ART: Yes, **Ann Nocenti** asked me if I wanted to write some stuff. . .and I will, eventually

RENEE: *Did you co-plot the X-MEN Annuals?*

ART: On the NEW MUTANTS SPECIAL and THE NEW MUTANTS ANNUAL, I didn't. That was all Chris'. On X-MEN ANNUAL #10 I did co-plot, and it was very nice. Chris came to San Francisco and we went to dinner and I said, "Let's do this and this and this," and Chris said, "But let's do this and this and this and this, too." So we had a plot that was really thick. It's tough working with Chris, because he'll give you a plot that ought to be twice as long as the book Inevitably, you have to throw away stuff. . .and it's really a shame, because it's always good stuff. It's nothing goofy or stupid or anything. It's always something nice. I wish there was some way to cram all that stuff in. I do my darndest, by golly, but.

RENEE: *Have you ever done any writing?*

ART: Just a short story for BIZARRE ADVENTURES. Actually, the story is okay. I just drew it badly. I had plenty of time. They said it wasn't due for a long time, I didn't do it for a long time. I ended up drawing those pages in a week. There's still no excuse for those being as bad as they are. But. . .they're really ug ly. It still reads okay. Maybe I'll re-draw it someday. . .it's just a silly little story.

RENEE: *Anything specific you'd like to write?*

ART: I'd like to write LONGSHOT myself, eventually, but we'll see. I love the way Ann writes him, too. In issue #2, there's a panel where LONGSHOT is supposed to be screaming, and for some reason in the panel next to him, Ann wrote "n-r-r-r-r-r." I didn't understand that. And I said, "Ann, why do have the panel saying "n-r-r-r-r"? She just laughed. Ann has such a bizarre writing sense. It's always interesting to see what she's going to do. I've always liked it

RENEE: *That's what makes LONGSHOT so interesting, all the weird, bizarre happenings.*

ART: That's what **Chris Claremont** pointed out that he liked about it. It's been drawn so straight, then all of a sudden this character's saying really weird things.

RENEE: *What do writers do that drive artists nutty?*

ART: Well, Ann and Chris, they just write so much, that it's hard to decide what not to put in. They'll put in things like I've never drawn before. That's a challenge, and that's good. . .something to expand on. I've never really been driven mad by a writer. The only time I had trouble is when they sent me a chapter of BATMAN. One chapter — so I didn't know what happened in any of the rest of the story. In one panel, a giant nickel is still standing. I didn't know that it wasn't supposed to be standing. And in one panel, Batman looks like he's crying — but I only had one chapter, what could I do? I couldn't change it. And then also in one chapter, Batman is growling. I hate that.

RENEE: *Is Batman not supposed to do those things?*

ART: I don't like him doing that. That's Wolverine's character. That's not Batman Batman is the detective. I hated that CLOAK AND DAGGER I did. If I had worked for that book more than one issue, I might have gone crazy. I got the plot and said, "I really can't do this." But I went ahead and did it anyway. That was my fastest job. I did it in three weeks. . .pretty fast. But I wouldn't do the cover for it, I hated the job inside so much.

worked more I might have gone crazy."

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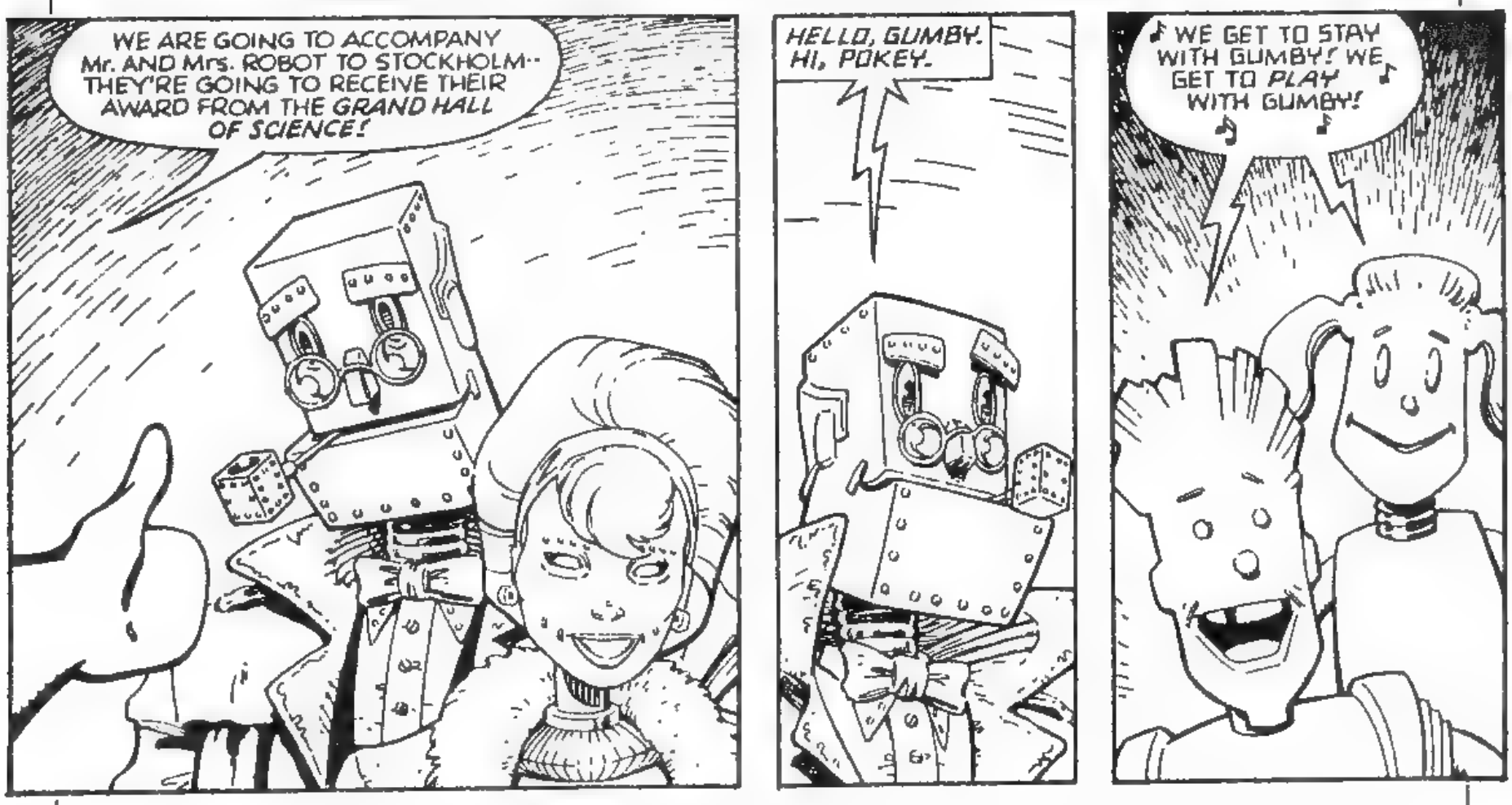

WE ARE GOING TO ACCOMPANY Mr. AND Mrs. ROBOT TO STOCKHOLM·· THEY'RE GOING TO RECEIVE THEIR AWARD FROM THE GRAND HALL OF SCIENCE!
HELLO, GUMBY. HI, POKEY.
♪ WE GET TO STAY WITH GUMBY! WE GET TO PLAY WITH GUMBY! ♪

Gumby TM & © 1987 Art Clokey

A friend of mine did an issue of CLOAK AND DAGGER before me, and we got it back, and there was one panel where drug dealers are talking and one says, "Baptiste, the drug deal went down," and the other says, "Yes, Baptiste, it went very well." Two different guys named Baptiste! So we decided everyone in that issue was named Baptiste. "Look at that guy in the cloak coming through the window . . . it's Baptiste!"

RENEE: *Have you ever been influenced by any writers?*

ART: I can't think of any writers that have had a big influence on me. None that I'm aware of, anyway. There's probably some that have. They just fall into the back of my mind and become the big sieve.

RENEE: *Okay, I'm just going to throw out a few questions now — how do you feel about Frank Miller's work?*

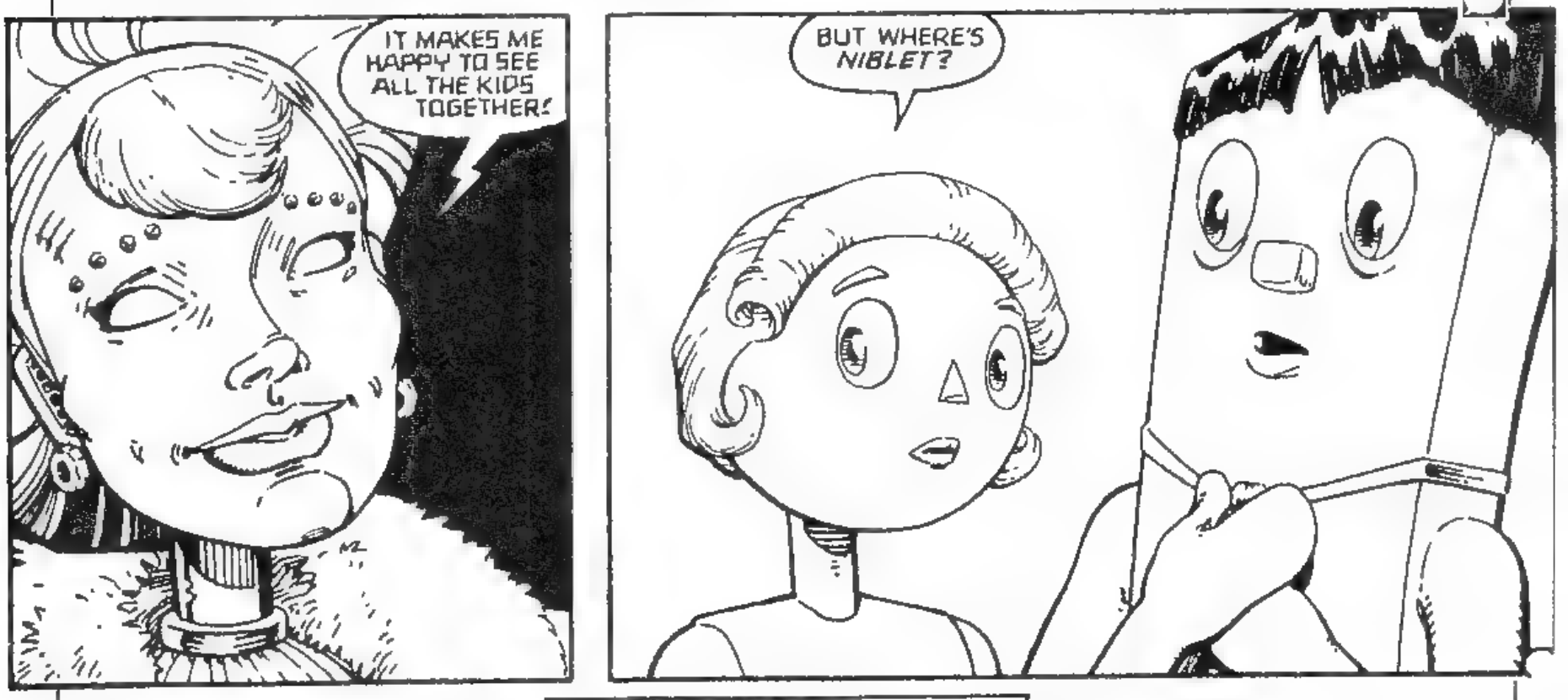
ART: I like to see when other artists draw my characters. It was really strange when **Steve Ditko** drew Spiral, even though he drew her really weird. Still interesting to see. I've never had any strong opinions about her. When I made up the characters, I did a big sheet of 20 extra characters that were supposed to be chasing Longshot. Ann just made her into a major character. There were others I had more ideas about than Spiral.

RENEE: *You've been called one of the hottest stars in the industry right now. How do you feel about that?*

ART: I don't. I feel the same way about it as the character sheets. I don't worry about it. I just want to draw comics, so that's what I do.

RENEE: *How many years, all together now?*

ART: About three and a half years. I was talking to someone yesterday and they said, "After you've been around for a few years, you'll be hated just like everyone else." And I think that's true. Once I've done enough work, the newness will wear off. I'm just the new guy . . . that's all.



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"Well, I'm in hog heaven right now."

Jane and Bill Woggon.

BILL WOGGON & BARB RAUSCH

In Part One, Boss-Man Bill Woggon and blazing illustrator Barb Rausch recapped their prodigious adventures over their long collaboration. In Part Two, this high-spirited duo describe their current plans, and tell why they're in hog heaven!

SHEL DORF: *I first found the Katy Keene fan movement through Alan Light's BUYER'S GUIDE FOR COMIC FANDOM, and there was an article — I believe they reprinted some publicity that Craig had gotten in a local paper. They reprinted the whole clipping, and several members of our Comic-Con committee took the BUYER'S GUIDE, so we decided that we would give Katy fandom a little boost using the con, and that's why we invited you to the convention.*

BILL: And I certainly appreciated it.

SHEL: *From there on, our first contacts with Craig and Barb were very pleasant. We found them to be terrifically cooperative and enthusiastic, and it was just a joy making Katy fandom a part of Comic-Con, which is where it belongs. Part of the philosophy of Comic-Con is to take cartoonists who may not have gotten enough praise and glory in their heyday and are now out of the limelight — to bring them before their public today and to let them take the bows that they deserve. That was an important part of it — Katy fandom remembering and honoring you because you had such an influence on their careers, and it's something they identified with.*

BILL: Biggest thrill of my life was when I got my Inkpot Award. You came to my table and said that **Allen Saunders** was down at the end of the table, and I said, "You're kidding — not **Allen Saunders,** he's up in years — you mean **John Saunders** don't you?" "No, Allen." He was in his eighties, and I went down and hugged Allen, and it was an absolutely beautiful reunion. Then when Allen got his Inkpot Award, I still wasn't thinking that I would be getting one, but Allen did a great job in getting his, and what he said was wonderful. Then after we got our awards, we went up to my room and we sat and reminisced and had a little John Barleycorn. It was the greatest reunion. Now Allen is deceased, sorry to say.

SHEL: *All that praise and everything got the wheels rolling again. The Archie people got excited about Katy Keene potential again, didn't they?*

BILL: They sure did. And Barb mentioned that at the con we met **Bob Overstreet,**

All art accompanying this interview, except where noted otherwise, is © 1985 Bill Woggon

"Arn Saba offered us the opportunity to debut

who publishes the COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE, and that's a big, big publication. And when he said that he wanted to have Katy on the cover, I just about passed out — I couldn't believe it. I came back, and I thought maybe the ideal cover would be a duplicate or one similar to the cover of KATY KEENE #1, which we did. **Cassie Bill**, who was my able assistant — together we worked on that, and Barb and **Craig Leavitt** wrote articles on the inside, and **Bob Overstreet** was so wonderful to work with.

SHEL: *It was like being on the cover of TIME magazine — only for comic fandom. It was really prestigious. People before you were Burne Hogarth, Carl Barks, and Will Eisner.*

BILL: It was a thrill.

SHEL: *From Katy being retired, she sud denly became a star all over again in the Eighties. Barb, can you tell me a little bit about your approach to the article in the PRICE GUIDE?*

BARB: Well, the thing that I really wanted to share with people was how KATY KEENE first of all was a work of art in its own right, and what a special thing it was for young people, and what a great outlet it was for talented kids. I spent seventeen years as an art teacher — I worked with gifted and talented students, and I know that it just isn't enough for mom and dad to day "Hey, you're doing nice work," These talented kids need an outlet in the real world for their work, and Katy Keene was that for me since I was just a kid. That's was I wanted to bring out in my article, and the fact that Bill, being the person that he is — that he is very warm and sharing, and even though he had a successful thing, he didn't keep it to himself, he took in the input of all these young people so it was as much ours as it was his.

SHEL: *When Archie Comics saw this revival in Katy Keene, how did they react?*

BILL: Well, they decided to do some reprints on KATY KEENE. And they reprinted about four issues, and I got a little bit of the royalties on it — not much, but they paid me some, then they decided to come out with the new version

SHEL: *Is this where John Lucas came in?*

BILL: Not immediately, no. They decided to take my name off — my name went off They revised Katy — they made Sis the candy kid a teenager. Katy didn't grow any older, but Sis did. *(Laughter.)* Then they found out that they needed Katy to look more like the Katy I created —

SHEL: *I remember seeing the first story, and it was a disappointment.*

BILL: — so they decided to get **John Lucas** in. I was thrilled to see him get in, that was great, one of my proteges coming in and getting a chance

SHEL: *One thing we haven't talked about is that many of your fans love to draw Katy themselves, and they can do some beautiful renditions. Jack Evans did this beautiful full-color painting that I remember you used as a backdrop for your chalktalk at the convention. Extraordinary piece of work. . . and John Lucas came to the convention with a portfolio of his Katy Keene drawings, and Barb Rausch showed off her Katy Keene drawings.*

BILL: So when they decided to come out with a new version my name went off, and **John Lucas** didn't get in right away, we had a little get together in a room down at the San Diego con, and we were talking about new charcters. I'm not taking all the credit for VICKI VALENTINE being in my name, you follow me?

SHEL: *Yes*

BILL: So we were sitting there — our daughter Suzie was there, Billy our son was there with his wife, and Barb was there, and Craig and John — we were all sitting in the room and we came up with a new character and decided that Vicki Valentine was a good name

BARB: And hadn't **Arn Saba** been talking to you about doing something on your own, that you would own yourself?

BILL: That's right, and I thought it would be great if, after all, you have the copyright — it is your creation.

SHEL: *Well, this is the Eighties now, when most artists want to own their own creations, and it only seemed right for you, who had this tremendous past record of successful characters, to now own your own character.*

BILL: So then I got to thinking seriously about Vicki Valentine and what she would look like, and the cast of characters, and so on, and in the meantime, **Susanna Oroyan**, a dolly sculptor from Eugene, Oregon, had a scoop story — well, she did a story on Katy Keene's comeback in DOLL READER.

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ANGEL CAKE! A NEW STAR! ISN'T SHE A DOLL!
LOOK! THERE'S ELLEN DOLAN! AN' SOPHISTICATED LADY!
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Vicki Valentine in NEIL THE HORSE."

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SHEL: *That's a magazine for fans of dolls — doll collectors?*

BILL: Right. She then heard about Vicki Valentine and she wanted to do a scoop story on that and so Barb and I got our heads together and decided, "Well, we can't miss an opportunity like this — a scoop story in DOLL READER," and we took the bull by the horns and went with it.

BARB: When **Arn Saba** found out that we were serious about doing something with Vicki, he offered us the opportunity to give Vicki her debut in the pages of NEIL THE HORSE.

BILL: That's right, Vicki was first introduced in NEIL THE HORSE #11.

BARB: That was her very first public appearance.

BILL: Then **Deni Loubert** of Renegade Press — she parted company with her husband who has CEREBUS THE AARDVARK, she wanted to go on her own .

SHEL: *Start her own publishing company.*

BILL: So we became one of her clients. She's been great to work with, and I have the copyright.

SHEL: *So now it's a brand new ballgame at — what age are you now, Bill?*

BILL: Same age as **President Reagan** *(laughter)*, seventy-five.

SHEL: *But the advantages you have — a terrific track record to build on — it's not like you're starting fresh, and it looks to me like Vicki is picking up momentum very fast. You've had a Christmas special, and a Valentine's Day special*

BILL: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, VICKI VALENTINE" Naturally, her birthday is on Valentine's Day, and in the first issue I was fortunate enough to get **Fess Parker**, a good friend of mine — he said it would be all right to use his name and his character — Davy Crockett. The other characters are more or less taken from our family. Angel Cake was our granddaughter when she was little — my wife Jane called her Angel Cake — A.C. for short. I've got pictures that I sent to Barb of Nancy Jane when she was little. Then, David Hunter is our grandson. Barb does a terrific job making him look exactly like him!

BARB: It's an actual portrait of David — a real dreamboat — Vicki's dreamboat.

BILL: My wife should come in here and tell you about her sister

SHEL: *All right, at this point we're going to bring in Mrs. Bill Woggon, Jane Woggon, famous Santa Barbara citizen. Bill has asked for your interpretation of...we were going through the VICKI VALENTINE characters and we came to who, Bill?*

BILL: Lotta Love, and we want your explanation on who Lotta Love is.

JANE WOGGON: Well, Lotta Love, who is my sister, appeared in KATY KEENE, and at that time she was called Bertha Bumples, and then when Bill started the new one with Vicki Valentine and Nancy Jane, who is our Angel Cake — when she was little, she's now twenty-three years old anyway, he wanted another character similar to Bertha Bumples in KATY KEENE, so along came my sister Bettie again, and so now she is Lotta Love and she is living it up.

SHEL: *That's great So VICKI is really a family project.*

BILL: Family affair

SHEL: *That really means a lot to you doesn't it?*

JANE: I'll say.

SHEL: *I think it comes through in Bill's work, too There's a real sense of family.*

JANE: He always has had that in him, and I think that's what made Katy so famous — because she actually seemed real to the fans, even though they knew she wasn't. They wanted to believe she was a real person

SHEL: *Can you remember how you first met Bill....*

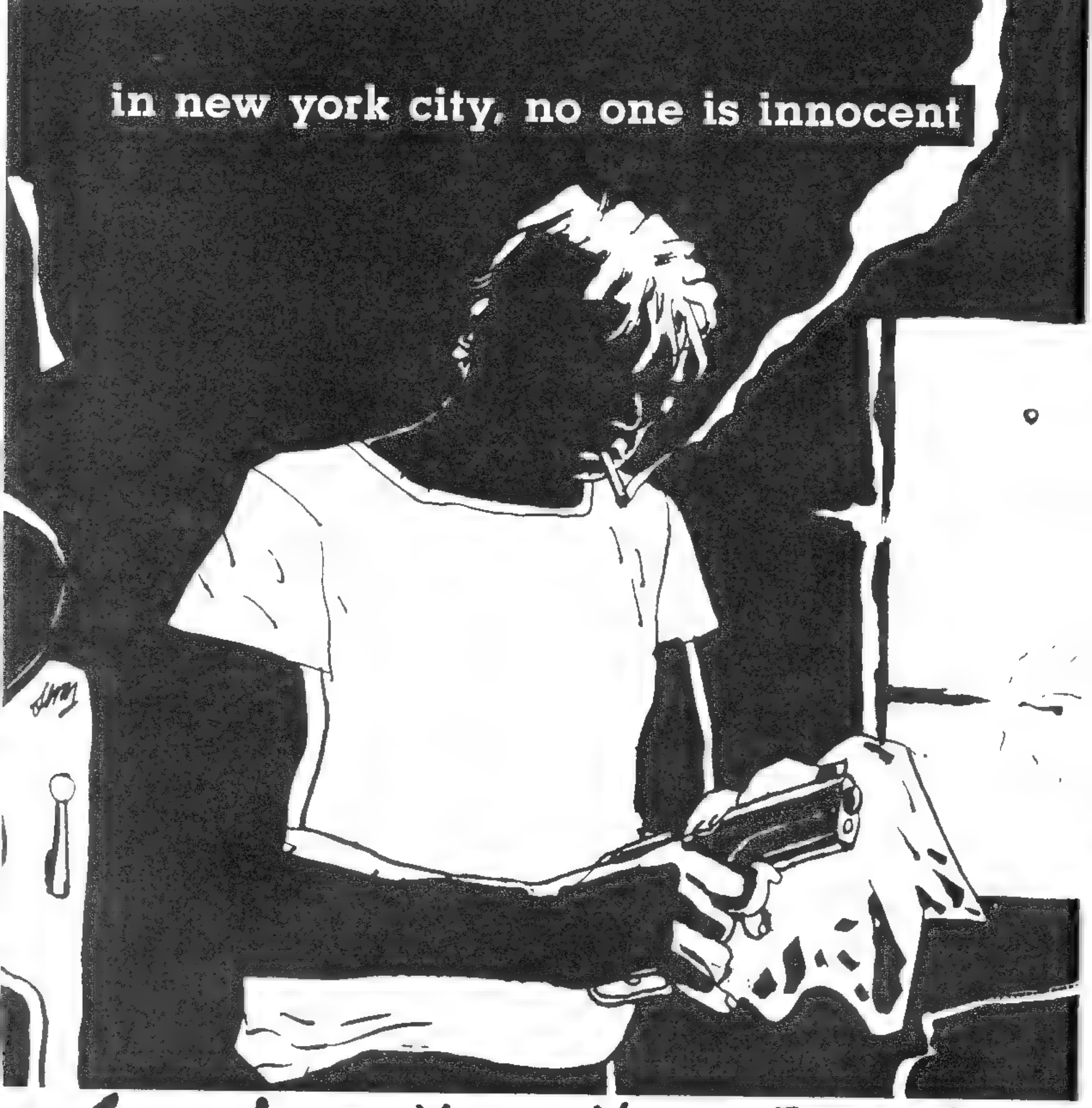
JANE: In the church choir.

SHEL: *....and your first impressions when you met him? I understand brother Elmer told him he was robbing the cradle?*

JANE: Well, he was! I was seventeen on our first date, and I lied to my parents I said that we were going to a party, and Bill took me to a public dance hall, which was a no-no in those years. And who do I meet — a fellow that worked with my father. *(Laughter.)* My daddy was a station manager for the New York Central, and here comes this fellow, and he was this nice handsome guy, "Well, Janie, wow it's good to see you!" So immediately he tells my daddy, and I'm grounded for six months — my first date! *(Laughter.)*

SHEL: *Well, what happened six months later?*

JANE: I went back to the choir, and we went along a little slower. We went together for two and a half years before we were married. We had a nice small wedding, the choir sang, which we didn't know was going to happen. Of course I'm one of those that cries when I'm mad, and I cry when I'm happy — and I was standing up at the altar and all of a sudden I was getting very teary eyed and I asked



SINNER

written and illustrated by carlos sampayo and jose munoz
translated by **deborah bonner** edited by **kim thompson** designed by **dale crain**
lettered by **bill spicer** cover color by **geoffrey notkin** consultant **art spiegelman**
publishers **gary groth** and **kim thompson** recommended for mature readers

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"We had a nice small wedding..."

our pastor — you're supposed to have something borrowed and blue, anyway I borrowed this hankie but I forget to take it with me, so I said to the pastor, "Pastor, can I borrow your hankie?" and he said, "No, I'm going to use it myself." *(Laughter.)* That's the truth — it really happened.

BILL: I want to tell Shel that Bettie — your sister — signs her letters "Lotta".

JANE: We just got a note from her, and she says "Lotsa Love, Lotta." *(Laughter.)*

SHEL: *She's getting right into character isn't she?*

BARB: She's now a celebrity in Perrysburg, Ohio.

BILL: She told everybody about it, and the Bowling Green paper ran a big article on it — on VICKI VALENTINE. One other thing — I got a kick out of Lotta's husband, and I needed a name for him, so I came up with Justin Love. *(Laughter.)* He's kind of in the background — maybe after dinner he helps clean up the dishes

BARB: He's always got some wry comment — you can tell he's thinking, "What have I gotten myself into?"

BILL: He's not in it as much – A.C. has more or less stolen the show.

SHEL: *Like Sis did.*

BILL: Right, and I'm going to dream up a story — just maybe one or two pages where Angel Cake comes in crying, "Our boss man says I steal! I never stole anything did I Aunt Vicki?" and Vicki would say, "Well, you never stole a thing The boss means you're stealing the show and the book."

SHEL: *It's that kind of gentle humor, I think, that gives the book its personality. Do you have any plans of taking them on world tours or cruises or changing the geography? What are your plans for VICKI VALENTINE?*

BILL: Well, we haven't had Kitty Kline in our last couple of books — not so much, but Kitty Kline is Vicki's boss Lady. In a future story I have in mind, Kitty Kline has a chance to go to Rome and Paris and different locations for fashion shows and a fashion convention or something, and something happens, and for some reason she can't make it, so Vicki is elected to go. Then you can get Rome and Paris in the background — even some romance where she meets someone.

BARB: Looks like I better start collecting travel folders

SHEL: *Have you done an analysis of the audience you're playing to? Most girls this age would like to be rock stars, or hang out with rock musicians or a group or something or work behind the scenes at a rock concert or be their gofer or get smuggled into their hotel room — stuff like this. Is this the kind of thing you're going to get into?*

SORRY I'M LATE, WILD BILL! I'VE BEEN GETTIN' RID OF TH' RATTLERS ON REAGAN'S RANCH!!
HI, FESS! HAPPY TO HAVE YOU AT HUNTER'S HAVEN! AH WANT YOU TO MEET SOME SPECIAL GUESTS WHO HAVE BEEN RIDING TH' RANGE WITH MISTER HUNTER!!

"I was fortunate enough to get Fess Parker and Davy Crockett."

BILL: Yes and no. What do you think, Barb?

BARB: Knowing Vicki and her personality — I don't think she's a celebrity chaser. I think if she got in a situation like that, it would be sort of inadvertantly through her job as a designer. Maybe one of these musicians would see a design of hers and use it in a show.

BILL: With characters — Katy Keene never became a famous movie star. Everybody dreams of becoming, and you feel more sorry for somebody like that!

BARB: Yes, it's easier for young kids to identify with someone with big aspirations like they have.

SHEL: *It's like Charlie Brown will never quite kick the football.*

BILL: That's right. And never gets a valentine. In our "Happy Valentine," Vicki comes home and goes to the mailbox and doesn't get any valentines or a birthday card and she wonders what happened, even the next day. But then Lotta Love invites her over, and Angel Cake has arranged for all the mail to be sent there, and that's where she gets the mail from...**Fess Parker** calls, and she gets a card from Mary Worth, giving her advice, and all this is arranged by Angel Cake, giving her a surprise. I even got the

The girls are thrilled to meet Fess Parker Wild Bill serves his delicious steaks!
WHAT'S TH' MATTER, MISS VICKI, AREN'T YOU GONNA SIT DOWN HERE AN' JOIN US CRITTERS?
I-I LOVE TO EAT STANDING UP, MISTER PARKER!
THANKS TO FESS PARKER FOR GIVING ME PERMISSION TO STAR HIM IN THIS BOOK! —BILL WOGGON

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"He's going to get his statue in the museum

DAVID'S JACKET, TROUSERS+SHIRT by RENALDO BARNETTE, BROOKLYN, N.Y.

U.S. Amateur golf champion, **Sam Randolph,** whose father is pro at our club -- we even got him to send a card.

BARB: You should see this guy's photo -- he's so good looking! Vicki is due for a golf lesson.

BILL: His picture will be in the book.

SHEL: *Indeed, indeed — he'd make a good love interest for her.*

BILL: In the summer issue, he's going to give her a golf lesson

BARB: She's very interested in sports!

BILL: We got permission from Sam -- and I've known him since he was a little boy. Barb, tell Shel the idea you've got about the wax museum.

BARB: I wanted to take advantage of the Hollywood area since I live there, and of course the big tourist trap is the Hollywood Wax Museum. So Vicki is down there, and she decides to go through. Of course, she's not so much interested in the Chamber of Horrors, but in all the romantic heroes, and fantasizes herself in scenes with **Clark Gable** and people like that.

SHEL: *Great idea.*

BARB: She has the fantasy of seeing herself in each of these great movie scenes.

SHEL: *Scarlet O'Hara in the arms of Clark Gable.*

BARB: Of course, **Errol Flynn** and all of those great romantic heroes. So she's walking through this dark corridor and she sees this familiar looking silhouette and she thinks to herself, "Gee, that looks just like David Hunter. I guess he's got a statue in the wax museum, too." And since she's got kind of a crush on David, she tiptoes up — she's going to give the statue a little peck, and it turns out that it's really David, and she gets the shock of her life. He's there being interviewed because he's going to get his statue in the museum pretty soon — right next to **Michael Jackson.**

BILL: We'll have that in a fall issue right around Halloween.

SHEL: *Barb can really think up this stuff -- she's really tuned into it.*

BILL: She's part of the family — part of the whole thing

SHEL: *I think it's also because Barb hasn't lost her fan's appreciation of this world. I notice a lot of the fans have grown up in Hollywood and have seen it all and are so used to it all, and they've lost that sense of magic — they've become cynics. Barbara still has that admiration -- I hope you never lose it.*

BARB: Well, I don't think I'm the only one. If you talk to **Arn Saba** and his appreciation for **Fred Astaire** and the great romantic musicals of the past, there was a magic there -- there really was something that has maybe been lost nowadays because. . .everything in the songs is so explicit nowadays, there isn't any fantasy left, and I think they lost something really important when they lost that. I think people really want fantasy -- I think sometimes more than they want explicitness.

SHEL: *I agree.*

BILL: Talking about fantasy — **Craig Leavitt** — he still keeps in touch, and he designed a gown for Vicki. A big beautiful gown with pin cushion heart designs all over. So we thought that it would be good to use with Vicki somehow for her "Happy Valentine" issue. So when Vicki gets all these letters from Broom Hilda and **Fess Parker** and all of them, she goes home on cloud nine. David Hunter even sent her a dozen roses, and it's a beautiful design, and we thought, "We're going to use it." And this is how we're going to use it — David Hunter sent her a dozen roses at the end of this surprise deal — Angel Cake even arranged for David to send them through Wild Bill Hickock — Wild Bill works for David Hunter. So Vicki goes home on cloud nine, and thanks her sister and her husband and Angel Cake for all the wonderful things, and she's walking on cloud nine, and when she lays her head on her pillow, and puts the roses by her bedside, she dreams David Hunter calls her and invites her to go to a Valentine's dance at his country club. He picks her up, and as the limousine waits outside, she's standing there in this beautiful gown, and he says, "You look ravishing — beautiful. I can hardly wait to get to the dance and hold you tight and dance cheek to cheek." They get to the dance, and he can't wait to dance cheek to cheek and hold her tight, and the pins in the pin cushion design punch him all over the place — and he can't dance far enough away from her, and even says in this wild dream, "I want my roses back." And she

— right next to Michael Jackson.''

HO! HO! I DIDN'T FORGET! THIS IS THE LATEST STYLE! THE BIG SHIRT IS IN--THE SHIRT-TAIL IS OUT!
IT IS? WELL! THEN I MUST STAY IN STYLE TOO, SIR!

wakes up sweating, and the roses are still at her bedside and she thinks, ''I'm glad this was only a dream.''

SHEL: *That's a good little bit of conflict to put in there.*

BARB: I put something in there that in her dream, she's given this dress by Kitty Kline, and then when the pins all stick David, she thinks, ''Gee, I'll bet Kitty put some sharp pins in here on purpose.'' *(Laughter.)*

BILL: A little rivalry. She brought these sketches in and I haven't seen them, so we work together

SHEL: *I think it's a good partnership*

BARB: Our minds work the same way.

BILL: She'll get some ideas, and I'm only too happy to put them in there.

SHEL: *This is marvelous. Barb, you have sort of realized a fan's greatest dream — you're working with your idol.*

BARB: Absolutely.

SHEL: *How does it feel?*

BARB: I'm having the time of my life — it's wonderful. And it's the greatest opportunity for professional growth, because every book is a challenge. I just spent a day and a half designing an apartment building for Vicki to live in — and I'm the girl who two years ago didn't know perspective from a hole in the ground.

BILL: When I had good assistants working on Katy, **Cassie Bill** was one of them, **Hazel Marten** was another — she did beautiful horses and outdoor stuff and perspective and so on, little did I know that Barb could do just as well — she does beautiful horses, her perspective is great, and her fashions are beautiful. She's all of what I had before rolled into one

SHEL: *That's marvelous. Barbara, when did you decide to come out to the west coast? Had you visited Bill before moving out here?*

BARB: Long, long ago on a family visit In 1956, I wrote to Bill and asked if I could visit, and he said, ''You're welcome to come, but unfortunately my wife and I will be away that particular day, but my assistant **Cassie Bill** will give you the grand tour,'' and of course she did, bless her heart, and it was almost but not quite as good as meeting Bill. The first time I met Bill was the first Katy Con — and that was like coming home — it was wonderful.

BILL: We did keep in touch by mail. We were on a trip then to Canada with the family, and later on I did a story in KATY KEENE on her taking a trip to Canada. You were talking about doing trips like I'm thinking about with Vicki — when we went to Mexico, we did a story on that in KATY KEENE

SHEL: *And you could research it yourself.*

BILL: Not that I'm going to Rome — I'm not going to Rome.

SHEL: *Why not? My ninety-year old uncle wants to go to London.*

BILL: We can dream, can't we?

SHEL: *Of course. Hope springs enternal. Barb, what made you decide to come to California and how has your life changed?*

BARB: I can give you that in one sentence. The San Diego Con made me decide to move out to California I attended in 1980, the first year that Bill was a speaker, and I just fell in love with cartooning and cartoonists and conventions and fandom and California all over again, and I thought to myself, ''This is for me — this is what I really want to do with my life.'' I had been a fan artist for several years in the Katy Keene fan group — always been a comic book fan, and even though I had a very successful career as a teacher, it just really wasn't enough. I thought to myself, ''Hey, I've go to give myself this chance.''

SHEL: *You're really doing it, too.*

BARB: Oh boy, I love it. People have been very kind and helpful to me. I can't say enough about people like yourself, Shel, and **Arn Saba** and other people who have given me a chance to work

SHEL: *And you've gotten a little bit into the animation area as well?*

BARB: Yes, I was very fortunate. **Will Meugniot** is working at Marvel Productions animation studios and he knew my work, and he's working on a production that requires a lot of fashions — it's very

"I just love working on NEIL THE HORSE."

fashion oriented It's called JEM, by the way, and it's a real clever show that's slanted toward pre-teen and teen girls. One of the first animated shows that has the slant. It's based on a line of Hasbro toys which appeared in Spring 1986. He knew my work, he knew I was fashion oriented, so he got me an interview at Marvel, and I did clean up storyboards for him, and two or three different producers of the JEM show for six months this year. The JEM show started as a mini-series and it finally wound up. I had to get back to Vicki, because we found out that we were going to go ahead with Vicki Our first issue had been a success, and so it was time to get back to it again, and I'm doing her full time now.

SHEL: *That's nice. So Bill, do you have any thoughts on your career and your life and where it is at this point?*

BILL: Well, I'm in hog heaven right now, and doing just what I like to do — dream up the stories, send the artwork and let Barb illustrate them, and take them over and put them in the mail and then go out and play a little golf. *(Laughter.)* It's a labor of love. So far. We're not making a bundle, but that's all right — Barb and I, we're both happy, right?

BARB: Absolutely.

Barb Rausch (right) with Trina Robbins at a signing.

BARB RAUSCH says . . .

Barb Rausch has served in various artistic capacities for Arn Saba on NEIL THE HORSE, Joshua Quagmire on CUTEY BUNNY, and most notably Bill Woggon on VICKI VALENTINE. This interview took place at Marvel Productions animation studios.

KEN JONES: *When did you start reading comics?*

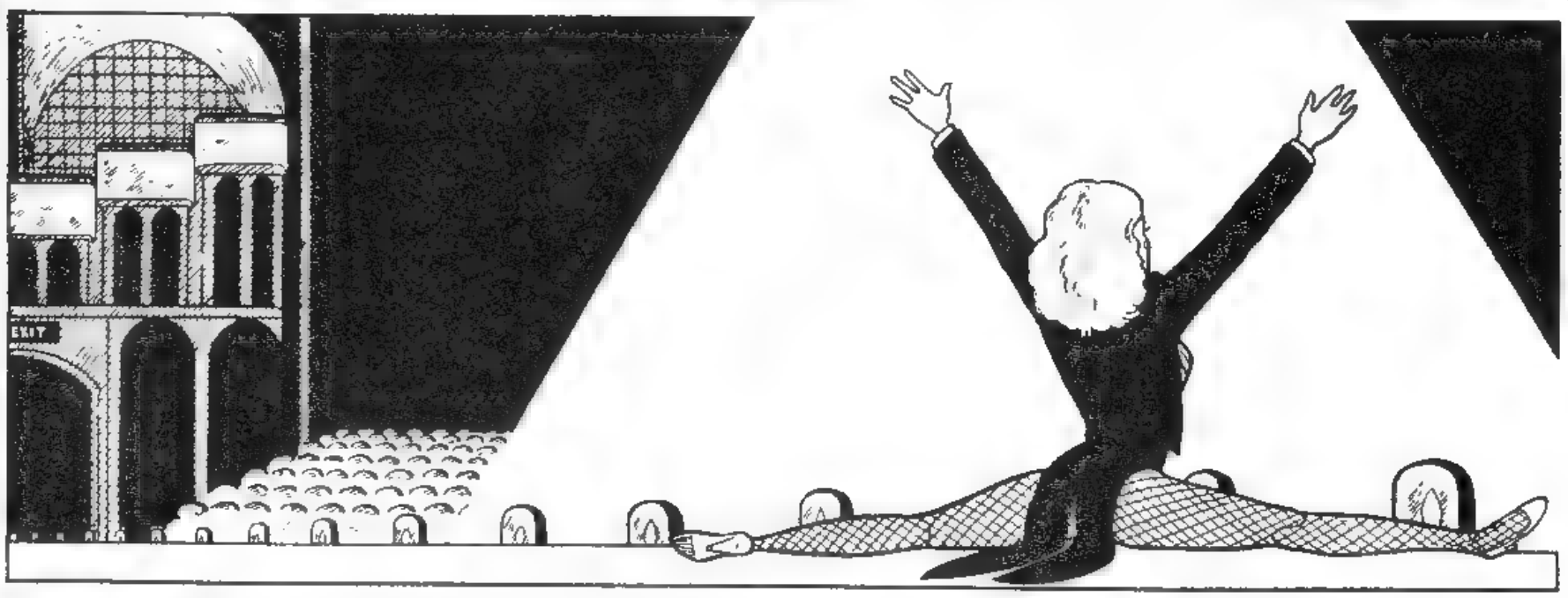
BARB RAUSCH: Age four or five. I think I was lucky to be growing up at the time when all comics were at their peak, at their prime. I remember even at the age of maybe eight or so thinking that certain issues of DONALD DUCK were so much better than all of the other ones. Then I found out not so many years ago that there was a man named **Carl Barks** who did those wonderful comics. That experience was kind of saying, "Hey, comic books have been reaching out to you in special ways every since you were a kid." Just at the point of age twelve or so, when many kids, especially girls, phase out of comic books, along came KATY KEENE. The first KATY KEENE comic I ever noticed was the first Annual. It was beautiful, tremendous. It had all those fabulous period gowns, the wonderful elaborate detail. I was gone, that was IT. I was a head-over-heels KATY KEENE fan right from then on. I started sending fashion designs, of course. I think I just swamped **Bill Woggon** with artwork. Every month I'd fill up a brown manila envelope with maybe half-an-inch stack of drawings. It wasn't too long before maybe out of self defense Bill started printing my work. Doing that in those days was a lot like having your kid appear on TV today in terms of mass media exposure. I was just really crushed in 1961 when Archie Comics decided not to publish KATY KEENE anymore.

KEN: *Why do you think it was cancelled?*

BARB: At that time, Marvel was making it big more with FANTASTIC FOUR and other comics of that type. A lot of non-superhero comics fell by the wayside. I was very, very taken with the FANTASTIC FOUR and **Jack Kirby's** art. I didn't know Jack's work at all because I'd been so involved with KATY KEENE. I picked up the first FANTASTIC FOUR, the first JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY that featured Thor, and the first issue of SPIDER-MAN. The art just reached off of the page and grabbed you. I still think that there is something about **Kirby's** art that is very expressionistic. I had never experienced anything like **Kirby's** raw power. Again here was another point where I might have faded out of comics and something else was there that excited me.

I was really into the Marvels all through the early Sixties especially when **Jack Kirby** and **Steve Ditko** were doing so much of the artwork. By the end of the Sixties I was a STAR TREK fan, although I was never a Trekkie. I lived in a small city in Michigan, and there wasn't much

"I had never experienced Kirby's raw power."



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of that kind of activity there. Then I kind of faded out on the Marvels, a little bit — there was less **Kirby** and they were becoming different. **Ditko** had left, and that raw "whatever it was" just wasn't there anymore. So I just kind of faded out of comics and got into my job. I was an elementary art teacher, and that can sure eat up your time.

KEN: *Why don't you tell us a little about your work on CUTEY BUNNY and NEIL THE HORSE?*

BARB: I just loved working on NEIL THE HORSE. I've learned so much working for **Arn Saba**. He is one of the best storytellers and layout men in the business He's very specific about what he wants and very good at explaining it in helpful ways. How we worked is through the mails and through the couriers and through the winds, the rains, the sleet and snow. He sent me thumbnails, roughs that are usually much tighter than most people's roughs. Where he left me latitude was in doing the costumes, the hair styles, and certain background details. When there's room for a little ad-libbing you might say I decorate things and so on. It's been a great experience for me to learn to work in another person's style.

KEN: *How about your work on CUTEY BUNNY?*

BARB: That was really run. Inking hasn't always been my strongest point but that happened to be what **Joshua Quagmire** needed at the time. I like his stuff. It's right off the wall but it's great. Sometimes I had to laugh at the page before I could settle down and ink it. Josh is a good teacher, too, and also very specific about what he wanted Sometimes it was more work for him to sit down and make sure I understood what he wanted than it would have been for him to do the inking himself. So I really appreciated the opportunity to work with him.

KEN: *If you were going to work on anybody else's character, who would you want to work on?*

BARB: That's hard to say! I am very adaptable. I really enjoy the work that I am doing for this animated show. The models are very fashionable and just a delight to work with, not too different from some of the KATY KEENE stuff

The designer of these JEM characters is a San Diego - area artist named **Paula La Fonda.** It's a treat to work in her style. JEM has also given me the opprotunity to work with and learn from some *terrific* comics pros — **Will Meugniot,** who produces the music-video segments, and **Romeo Tanghal,** who is doing JEM storyboards.

KEN: *As a closing comment could you tell us what else you want to see happen in the comic-book industry that hasn't happened?*

BARB: Yeah, I'd like to sit down and get my book idea together and get it published! I've done other people's work and I enjoy that, particularly when I respect the creator I am working with. But the real nitty gritty is to get your own stuff together.

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Barb Rausch
Born: 7 June 1941 — Indianapolis, Indiana
Residence: Hollywood, CA
Training: B.A. Art Education and M.A. Art, Michigan State
Credits: Penciller, NEIL THE HORSE — all issues; Inker, CUTEY BUNNY #3 and #4; Pencils, Inks, Covers, VICKI VALENTINE — all issues; Storyboard, Model design, Layout cleanup, JEM — Marvel Productions

ZAT EES ALMOST ZE SACRILEGE, TU SAIS!....WHERE EES ZAT 'OT CHOCOLATE?....MES AMIS, WHAT WOULD I DO WIS'OUT YOU?
WELL, YA'D PROBALLY EAT BETTER, FER A START!

"Federal Express lost Frank Miller's

Photo: Pat O'Neill

RICHARD BRUNING

This issue, DC art director Richard Bruning and production manager Bob Rozakis pick up where they left off last issue — about Miller's Batman, Byrne's Superman, DeStefano's 'Mazing Man, and World Color's infamous Flexographic printing press.

BOB ROZAKIS: Frank sent a package of artwork patches by Federal Express; Federal Express lost the package for ten days. They didn't know where it was — their commercials are for the birds. They kept saying, "Somebody signed for it." Well, it never got here. Frank had to redo the patches.

PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL: *I just finished re-reading DARK KNIGHT, and things that bothered me the first time were even worse seeing the whole four issues at once. When the one-volume package comes out, will those problems be corrected? Things like strange words like "abbgrant" will be corrected?*

BOB: All those typographical corrections were made — every one that we found, every one that Frank found...

PAT: *The identifications of Lana, Lola, and Lois are all straight?*

BOB: Lois no longer appears in the book in any capacity. She went back to being Lana

There were a bunch of other things. My favorite in the whole series was the business about the country of Corto Maltese. It was shown clearly on one of the TV screens to be an island, and further along in the series it says that Soviet tanks were...

PAT: *Rolling over the border...*

BOB: I called Frank and asked, "Frank, exactly where *were* these tanks" That was changed to be Soviet destroyers in the waters off the island, rather than the Soviet tanks coming up out of the water and rolling over the island.

RICHARD BRUNING: We had lots of problems like that. Bob and I alternated going up to Ronald's to oversee the printing. There were times when we were about to go on press and I'd see a mistake like that, and go, "What are we gonna do?" They'd pull the film and start scratching in a little letter, to try and fix

art. We called it 'Dark Knightmare.'''

BOB & BOZ

Photo: Pat O'Neill

it any way they possibly could, without having to entirely stop the presses, and lose a day or more of press time.

Todd Klein did some lettering corrections that we had Ronald's shoot and patch in; other things, missing commas, exclamation points that had to come out, I just sat there and painted the film, page by page

PAT: *How about a more recent project...*

BOB: Than DARK KNIGHT? That's not over yet!

PAT: *It will be by the time this sees print. Part of the reason we're talking today, instead of a week ago, is that you guys were on call to go up to Montreal to oversee the printing of HISTORY OF THE DC UNIVERSE. Did anything special come up out of that?*

BOB: Well, other than Richard's penchant for putting red type on blue backgrounds...

RICHARD: I thought it would look pretty .

BOB: And the usual last-minute delivery of artwork — this time not by the artist in the final scheduling, but by the colorist

PAT: *I was talking to my buddy Bob Greenberger, the coordinating editor on that project, and I mentioned that I found what seemed to be an error in the first volume. It's probably Marv Wolfman's error, and it's not on a major character.*

On the page that talks about Camelot, right in the middle of the page, is a picture of the Silent Knight. Two pages later, the Silent Knight is described as existing during the reigns of Kings Richard and John

BOB: He was around for a long time...

PAT: *Anyway, Bob immediately pulled out the WHO'S WHO. The Silent Knight is supposed to be in Camelot — George is right; Marv is wrong when he wrote the copy.*

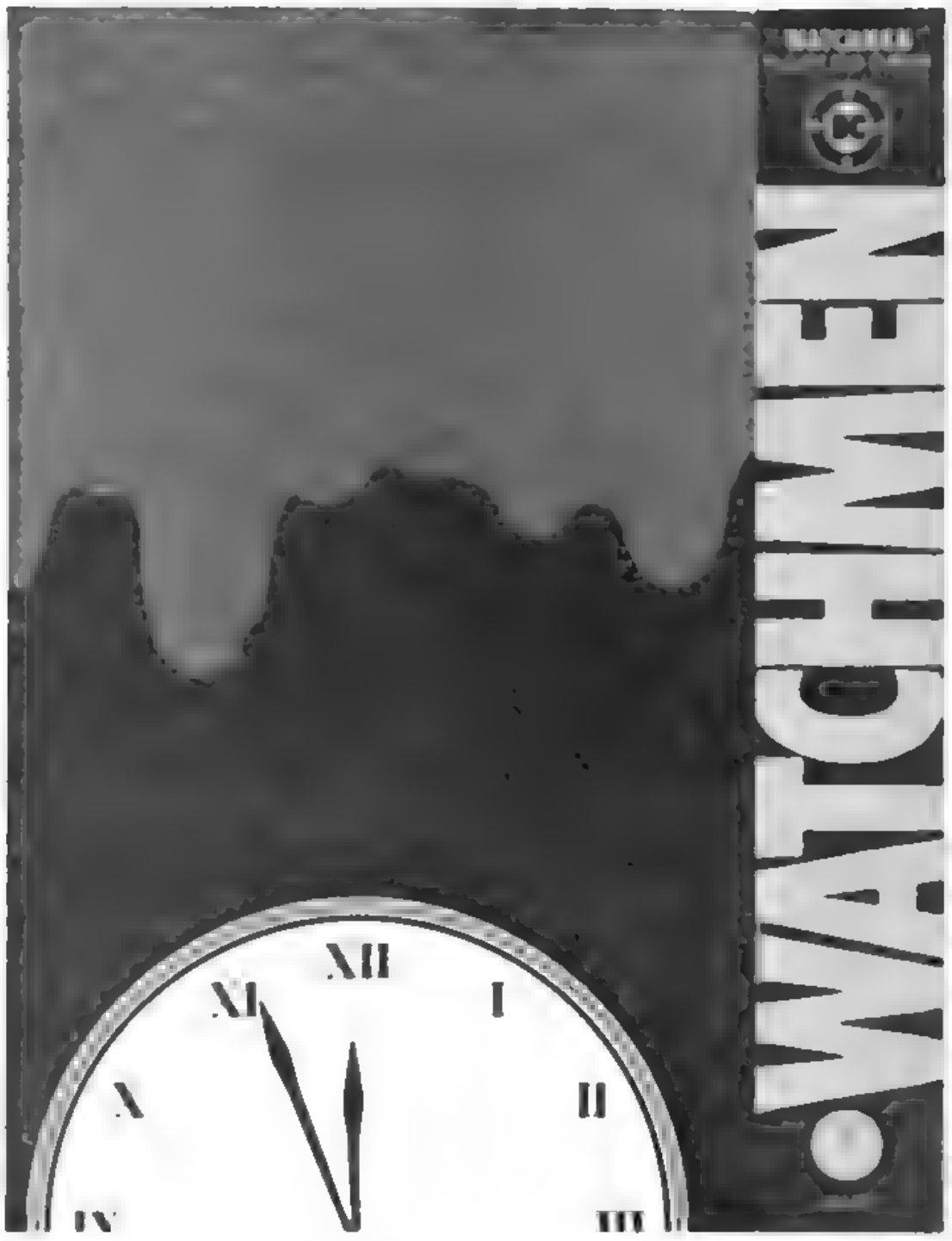
RICHARD: We'll be lucky if that minor mistake is the only one in HISTORY. When you think of the hundreds and hundreds of characters involved, and the thousands and thousands of stories reviewed to compile it...I know the colorists went mad, because there were pages with dozens of characters on them.

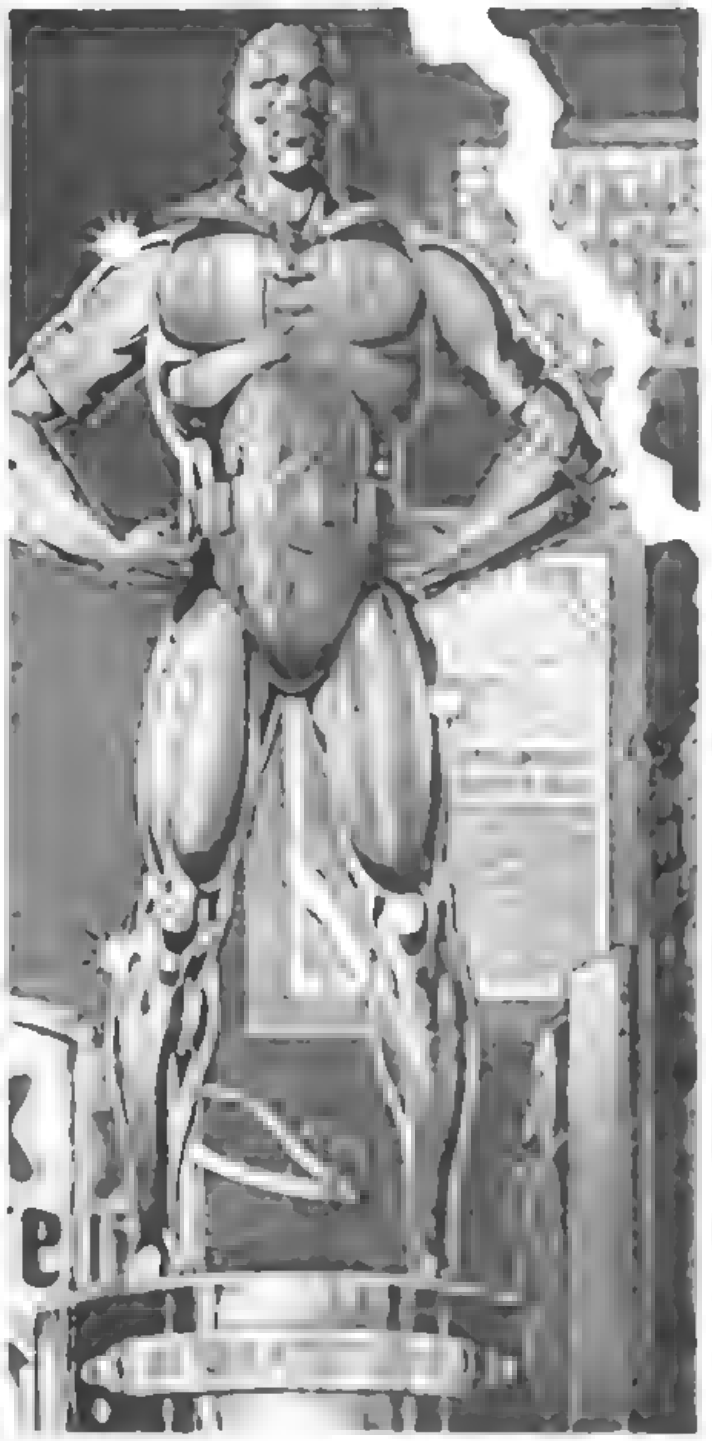
BOB: They'd call up and say, ''Who *is* that?''

RICHARD: Characters that none of us have seen in 20 or 30 years...

BOB: Of course, George is fiendish that way. In CRISIS, he just kept putting characters in backgrounds, and we'd sit there and say, ''Now, who is *this* supposed to be?''

"The copies of WHO'S WHO #1 were





PAT: *The colorist wants to say, "I'm just gonna do the whole thing in knockout..."*
RICHARD: Right

BOB: We had characters that no one would remember, including the Quakemaster, a villain I created in a Batman story in EARTH-SHATTERING DISASTERS, a DC SPECIAL. But there he is in the background. Even I asked, "Why did George bring him back?" He's just fiendish that way

RICHARD: On HISTORY, it wasn't just a case of the artist handing in the artwork, getting it colored, and that was it. After George turned in his work, we spent weeks in coloring, touching it up, setting the type, to make it look just right — not too close to the art, not too far away. We were constantly doing last minute corrections, to be sure the accuracy was as high as possible. I'm sure there will still be mistakes, but — honest, folks — we did the best we could.
BOB: We expect the **Don Thompson** list of typos. I spotted one as I was standing watching the pages come off the press — check out the wanted poster for El Pappogayo. Somebody has already written in about the back cover copy — "Climatic changes."
RICHARD: The weather was lousy — that's what changed everything
PAT: *What's wrong with the wanted poster for El Pappogayo?*
BOB: It's "El Pappo-ayo" — there's no "G" in there. That's one of those things you can't change at the point we discovered it — when the press is running and the pages are coming off at 30,000 an hour.
PAT: *Let's get back to production and printing. About the time DC began the CRISIS and WHO'S WHO series, both you and Marvel began using the Flexographic press for certain titles — indeed, DC printed the first issues of CRISIS and WHO'S WHO that way, making a big deal out of the process.*

The Flexographic press did not get a good "press," as it were, from the fan and trade publications...

RICHARD: Because it looked so bad
PAT: *Exactly. Is DC still printing anything on the Flexi?*
BOB: About four books a month.

PAT: *Is that required out of Sparta?*
BOB: No Marvel seems to be much more happy doing it than we are

When the people from Sparta first came to us and proposed the Flexographic process, and were listing its capabilities and its options, and all the wonderful things it would do, and how great it would look, we were very much interested — *I* was very much interested.
RICHARD: Bob's a big supporter
BOB: Yeah, I am a big supporter of Flexi — or Flexo. I take all the blame — I'm the one who pushed for it, initially

We felt that it was something that would make a difference in the look of the comics. Obviously, the colors are much brighter. When it's quality-controlled well, it's a much cleaner looking book The inks are water-based rather than oil-based, so they're not as heavy, they don't

horrendous. The fan press was vehement."

soak in as much. They're not as greasy, they don't smudge. I think that there is still a lot of potential for it. The problem that Sparta has is that they converted a letterpress to Flexo, and they're still running into problems with it. They went through about 47 different formulations of ink, before they found one that really worked

One of the big problems is the breakdown of the plates. Quality control at that speed, especially with the paper we use — newsprint It starts to fuzz up the plates rather quickly, which is why you get the smudging and blotching

PAT: *As we did with letterpress and off set, can we get a layman's explanation of how Flexo differs from the others?*

BOB: It's basically somewhere in between. It's basically in the plate-making process that the differences lie. It's much closer to a letterpress than an offset process. Without getting technical, I don't think there's any way to explain the difference.

PAT: *Were you surprised at all by the vehemence that was expressed by the trade and fan press in reaction to the process?*

BOB: The vehemence that was expressed by the fans and the fan press was no where near the vehemence that was expressed by me when we got our office copies of WHO'S WHO #1 in here. For that book, I flew out to Sparta and stood there and did a press okay. The samples that we brought back were beautiful. The colors were bright, the type was nice and legible, there were no problems with it. The copies that we got were horrendous, as I'm sure everyone reading this is well aware. They ended up reprinting quite a large number of those books, because they were so bad

I called them up and said, "What happened to the quality control? When I walked away from the press, so did everyone else, obviously, because no one watched what was coming off." The paper starts to fall apart — you're dealing with newsprint, which isn't that great a paper to begin with. You get paper dust and it clogs up the plate.

PAT: *That explains those times when you'd see a splotch of heavy color in the middle of a lighter screen...*

BOB: That was lint, getting on to the plate, picking up the ink, and splotching as it went along.

The people at Sparta felt the quality control was high enough, and they weren't watching as closely as we were.

RICHARD: Poor Sparta.

PAT: *Do you still find those same problems cropping up now?*

BOB: Not as much. They've worked out a lot of the problems.

Let me tell one amusing story about this multi-million dollar press. The first book we printed on Flexo was SPANNER'S GALAXY #1, and they were having a problem. As the pages came off, outside of the art area, on the edges of the pages, they were getting ink blotches. Basically, a printing press consists of a circular drum, with the plates attached. The paper goes around that, and you're printing eight pages at a time. Well, in between the pages, on this big flat, as it's called, they were getting blotches of color

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"I saw CRISIS and felt crestfallen."

PAT: *Which would still show up, even after they were trimmed for binding...*
BOB: Right. The individual plates are held in by pieces of metal — and those metal pieces had a slight bulge in them and were picking up ink and transferring it to the paper.

So here we are, this is the launch of the Flexo press — I'm standing there with the president of World Color, the sales reps, photographers — and here are two guys with a piece of wood and a balpeen hammer, going along the press, putting the wood on the metal lock piece and BAM! BAM! BAM! flattening it out so it wouldn't pick up ink. This is their multi-million dollar press, and they're fixing their big problem with it by two guys with a hammer and a piece of wood. Welcome to the 20th Century.

RICHARD: I think we've seen a lot better results from Flexo since then. I'm not a particularly big fan of Flexo. I remember seeing CRISIS #1 and feeling crestfallen. But we've seen a number of jobs, especially in the last year, where they're obviously learning how to do some of the things properly. Whether it will ever be really good enough to replace letterpress entirely is another question. To me, the coverage on the blacks is still inadequate — the colors are strong, the yellow too much so, but the blacks still look grayish. There's a potential there, but, speaking as a fan, should we have to sit through the experiments? To be perfectly honest, should we have to pay for these experiments? Maybe it's necessary to maintain that 75¢ comic book on the market, because those big letterpresses were built around World War II, when there were so many comic books coming out. Now they're falling apart, and the printers are understandably reluctant to buy new ones because there are fewer comics companies than there were back then, or to order the parts to repair them, if parts are even still available.

PAT: *There was a time when places like World Color Press were making a lot of their money not just from printing comic books, but from printing the color comic sections for Sunday newspapers. They're not doing that as much any more, because the newspapers have their own color plants now.*

RICHARD: Right. So the technology is changing and we may have to change with it.

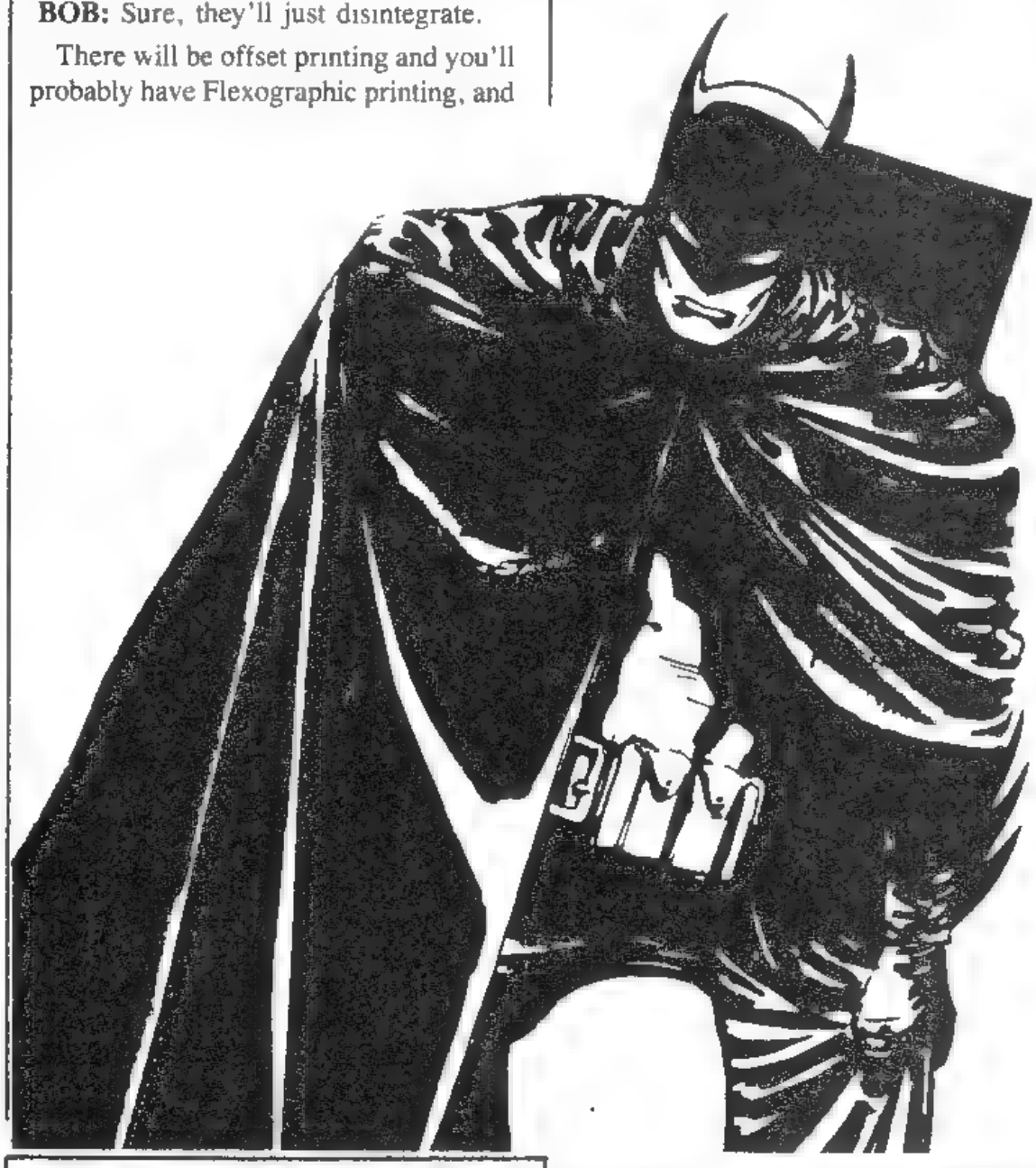
Flexo was not developed for us. It was developed for printing on plastic bags, like those crinkly plastic things you get at the supermarket now. That's what it was made for. That doesn't mean it can't be adapted for our purposes, and that's what we're trying to do here.

PAT: *Do you think that using Flexo on a better quality paper would solve some of the problems?*
BOB: I think it would solve some of the problems and create others.
RICHARD: You get that super gaudy look. You put Flexo on Mando paper and you get those yellows that hurt your eyes to look at. It's too white a paper for the crispness of the colors, so it's actually better to work on the cheaper newsprint. It's mostly going to be solved as the printers learn how to lay that ink down — which could be learned from experience.

I like offset printing myself
BOB: Well, you can't have everything on offset..
RICHARD: I couldn't afford to buy it, and you out there couldn't.
PAT: *Do you see a point in the future, perhaps 15 or 20 years from now, when the number of letterpress-printed books is considerably below what it is now? This depends in part on the costs of offset printing*
BOB AND RICHARD: Sure.
BOB: I think eventually you will have *no* more letterpress books. .
PAT: *Partly because the letterpresses will have fallen apart...*
BOB: Sure, they'll just disintegrate.

There will be offset printing and you'll probably have Flexographic printing, and that will be that. There doesn't seem to be anyone else capable of printing newsprint comic books on letterpress. We get calls from advertisers who are supplying film for ads and they ask, "How are you printing this?" and we say, "Rotary letterpress," and they ask, "Do they still *have* that?"
RICHARD: It's in a cave in the back.
BOB: We keep it in our garage
RICHARD: Plus, you look at the industry in the last ten years — we've obviously made a move toward more sophisticated printing and more sophisticated formats, as the market goes toward the direct only shops, and as the general audience out there comes to appreciate the better look.

A lot of people still won't even look at comic books, because the average package looks cheap. There may be a good story inside, and good art, but the package is perceived as cheap, which it is. So to bring new readers in, we have to move toward better printing because the average person is used to the slick, color magazines they buy every month for their specific hobbies and interests. Comics are one of the few things out there that's put together like a Sunday supplement. It might be in our own best interests, if we want comics to be read by more of the general



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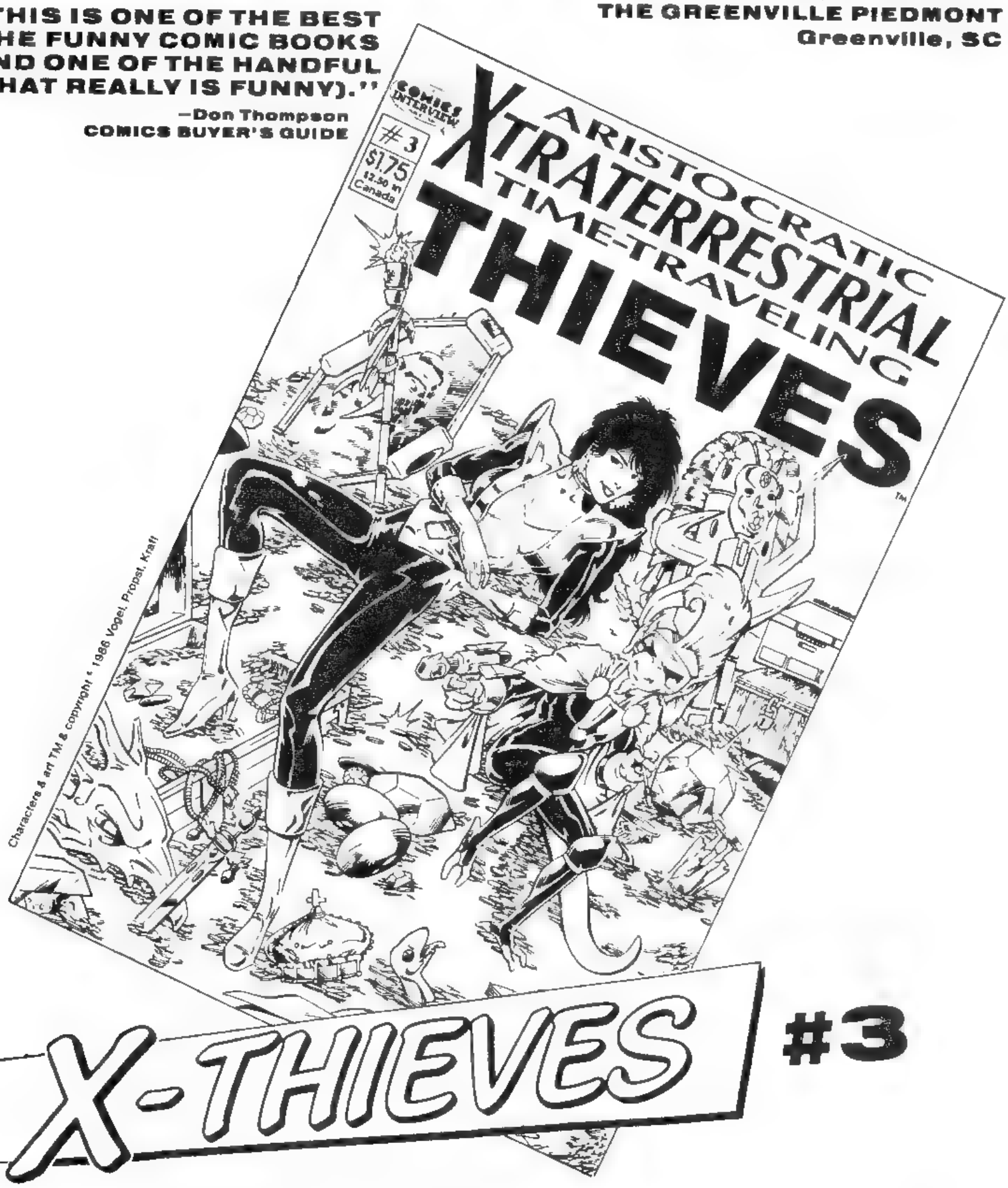

X-THIEVES #3

When you were a kid, didn't you hate it when your mom told you **what** to do, **when** to do it, and **how** to do it? Now that you're an adult, you don't put up with that sort of stuff, right? Right!

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"The X-MEN book rambles on and on."

populace in America, to not print them on letterpress

Obviously, cheaper publications are more accessible to kids I didn't care about the printing when I was a kid, I just thought they were fantastic. Of course, they were only 12¢ or 15¢ or 20¢ then.

BOB: They're still perceived as being a kids' thing. Every now and then, you talk to someone who finds out you work in comics and they say,"Oh, do they still *have* those?"

The other line that always gets me is: "I remember when they cost a nickel." Now comic books —

BOB, PAT AND RICHARD: – *never cost a nickel!*

BOB: There was one book called NICKEL COMICS, and it lasted maybe 20 minutes.

RICHARD: I doubt many people remember that one

It surprises me that people think they should still cost a dime, as though anything else that cost a dime 25 or 30 years ago still cost a dime. "Comics cost 75¢ now?!" So what? Look what everything else costs

BOB: They bring that up and I recall that when I first started buying comics, they were 10¢. I had a quarter, I bought two comics and a Hershey bar. You go buy a Hershey bar for a nickel now.

PAT: *A friend and I once did a little survey. We talked to a bunch of kids between eight and 12 years old, and we asked them what their weekly spending money was, from their allowance or doing chores, whatever. We discovered that their weekly spending money was from five to eight dollars. When I was that age my weekly spending money averaged about $2.50 or $3.00*

BOB: Mine averaged a buck-and-a-half.

PAT: *Well. I'm 35...*

BOB: So am I — you got a better allowance than I did back then.

PAT: *Or I was more frugal with what I spent it on beside lunch.*

Anyway, I figured that with the 12¢ that comics cost back then, I could buy X number of comics. With the same roughly seven dollars that a modern kid of that age has — guess what? He can buy approximately the same number of comics, at 75¢ a piece. It hasn't changed — the inflation factor is exactly right

BOB: The one big difference is that when we were buying comic books for a dime, or 12¢, the only other price was an annual for a quarter. Now you have

PAT: *$1.00, $1.25, $1.50, $2 00, $2 95...*

BOB: There's lots more product out there in lots more formats. But you're also appealing to an older audience...

PAT: *...and a wider audience.*

BOB: Who did you know that was 35 years old and reading comic books when you were eight to 12? By the time I was 13, people were saying, "Haven't you stopped yet?"

PAT: *Rich, let me ask you this — in regard to your future and the future of comic books. What would you like, as an art director, to see yourself and the industry doing in the next four or five years?*

RICHARD: A couple of things. First of all, I think the mini series may be a very good thing for the industry. Partially because one problem I see in comics, after reading them all my life, is that a lot of characters are just rambling aimlessly in a monthly book. They don't need to end any storyline

One of the best selling comic books coming out today has, to my mind, just had this rambling thing going on for years and years

PAT: *You can name names — you mean the X-MEN, don't you?*

RICHARD: Did I say that? He said that — but Chris .

It's a book that I liked once, but it's rambling on and on. There are some DC books that are like that, too. When you've got the discipline of a limited series, you've got a beginning, a middle, and an

Another offset book, pioneered by Bob and Richard — LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES.

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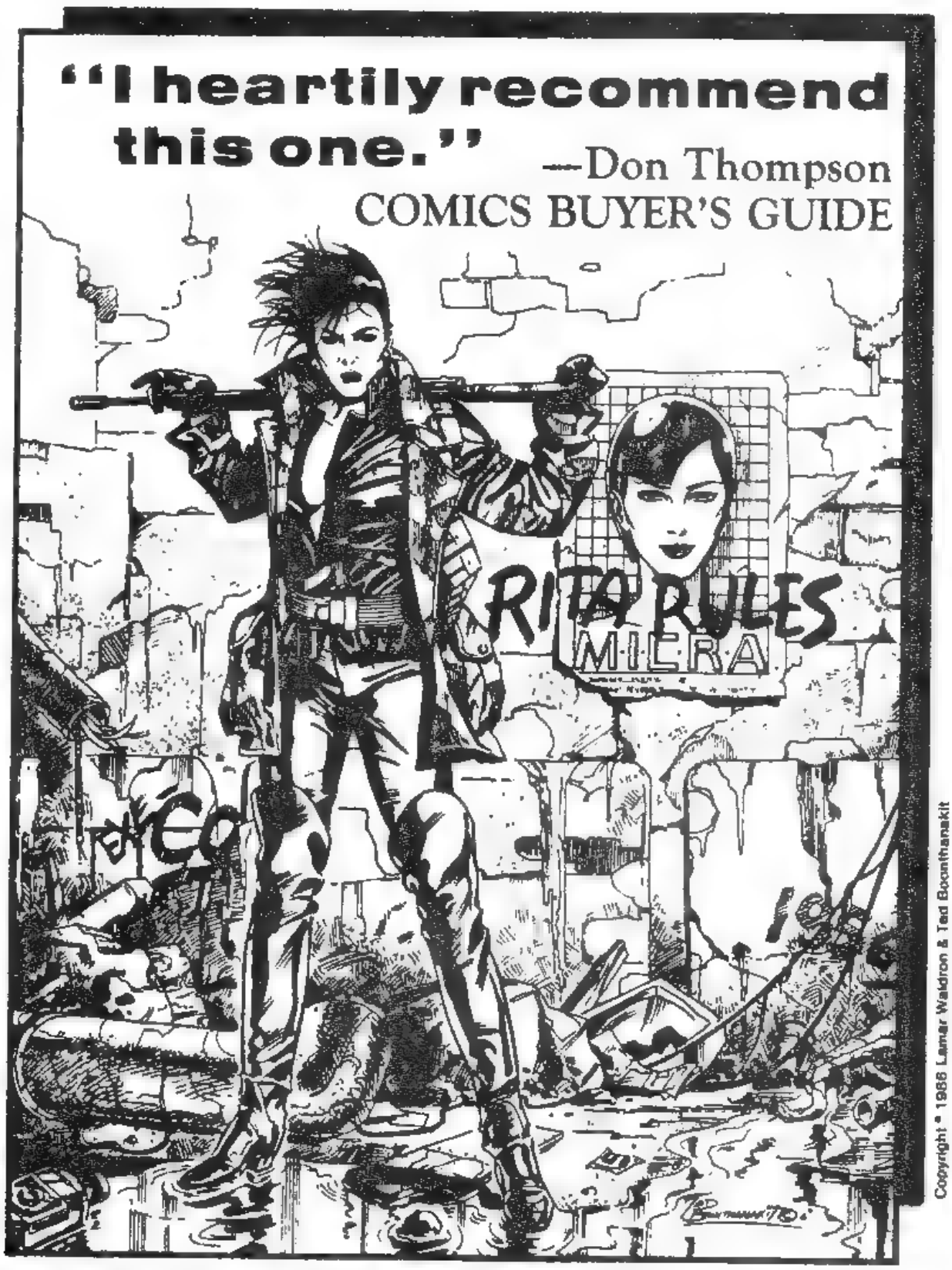

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A COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

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"That will be 'Batman — The Silly Year.'"

end. When you talk to adults, "You want to read comic books?" "Sure, what issue should I pick up?" "Number 375." "What?"

No way. They don't want to touch it, and I don't blame them. You go to a movie, you see the beginning, the middle, and the end. You come out and it was a great experience. You may go back in a year and see the sequel, because you like the characters and setting.

You read a book. I loved Sherlock Holmes books when I was a kid — I'd read everyone I could get. But each was separate. There's a culmination, an enjoyment, because it has an ending. The individual stories could still build off what had come before.

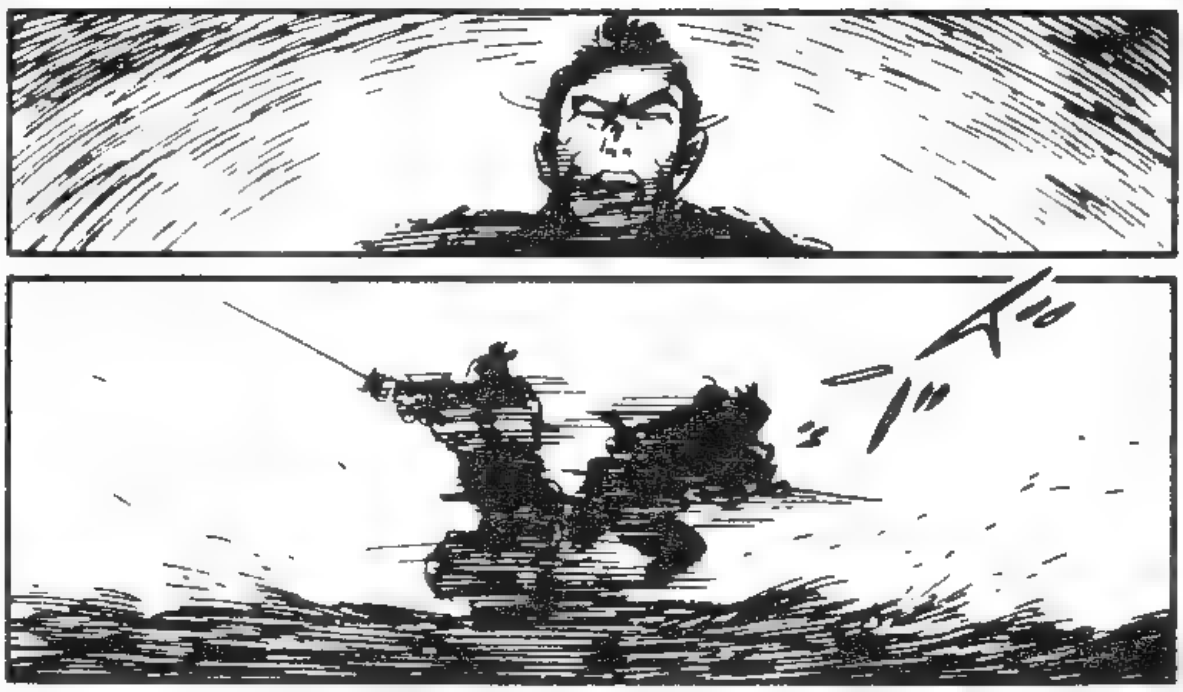
BOB: You feel like you've gotten something for your money, not just a chapter. It's like going to the movies and being told, "You can watch the second half-hour of this movie, but then you have to leave. Come back next week and we'll show you the next half-hour."

RICHARD: It's not even like the serials in the old days. Then, even if it were a 16-part serial, you knew there'd be an ending. Now, in comics, there's no thought of an ending. I think a lot of writers — no one in particular, some work for DC, some for Marvel — have no sense of wanting to finish the story. If they're not ridden hard editorially, they are going to take a good idea, divvy it up into 12 pieces, and that's a year's worth of issues. It should have been one issue, or maybe two or three issues

In Europe, where they serialize stories, there's always the compilation at the end We're just starting to see that now DARK KNIGHT is the first one where you can give it to someone and say, "Here's a great book," and they can sit down and read it. It's 200 pages, it's not a bathroom read. You can read it awhile, put it down, and come back to it. You can put it on your shelf and be proud to have it there

We're doing the same thing with THE SHADOW mini-series that **Howard Chaykin** did, and I think you'll be seeing a lot more of it in the future, because the mini-series allows us to do that — put the whole story together in one volume.

PAT: *Arguably, the first compilation was the Starblaze version of ELFQUEST. Do you see a possibility of a combination of the two — in the sense of "Batman — Year One" and "Year Two" — or the yearly mini-series like Marvel's two HERCULES runs? So, in a sense, the book is coming out on a monthly basis, but as a series of completed stories.*



Yet another teen-age mutant Miller ripoff — except this one came out thirteen years *before* RONIN! An example of Japanese comics where, like in Europe, they have serials with beginnings, middles and ends, unlike most American series! These duelling Samurai, from KOZURE OKAMI, are reprinted courtesy of MANGA! MANGA!, an excellent book on Japanese comics by Frederik L. Schodt.

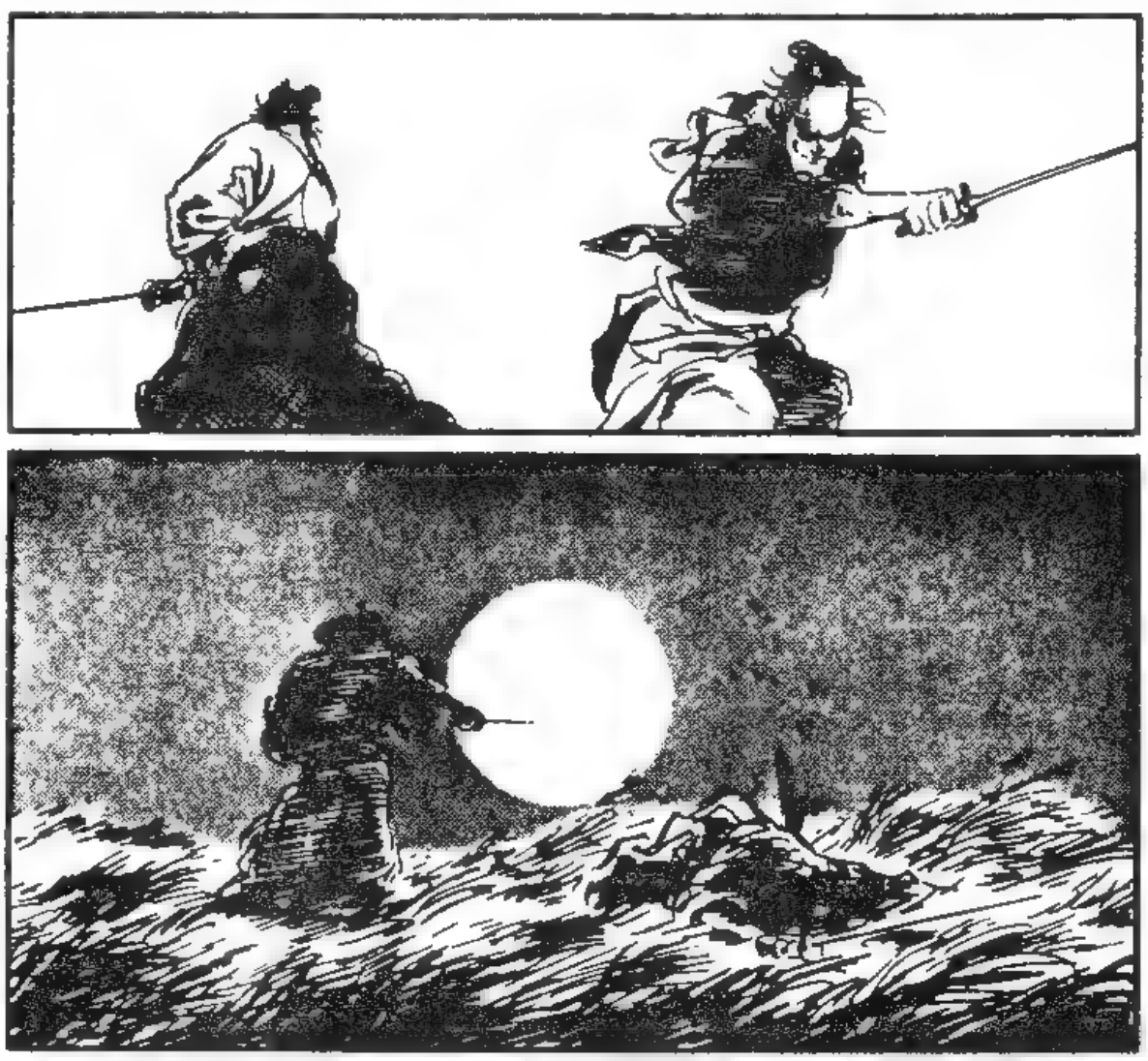
BOB: I think that if you did that, come out with a mini-series about the same characters every three or four months, you'd have everybody trying to kill you. I can see doing it once a year — like SIX FROM SIRIUS, or "Batman — Year Three" — that will be the silly year, by the way. **Frank Miller** and I talked about it. Bat Mite and the zebra-striped bat suit .

PAT: *Ace the Bat-Hound . . .*

BOB: . . .that will be "Batman — the Silly Year."

RICHARD: You can still do it — within an ongoing series there should be enforced, editorially, a policy that your storylines will conclude.

I was talking to **Andy Helfer**, who is now going to be writing THE SHADOW. **Bill Sienkiewicz** will be drawing the first six issues Bill doesn't want to do the first six issues and, if the story's in the middle



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"The change in the planet Krypton I

WELCOME HOME, MY LORD I TRUST YOUR JOURNEY WAS A SUCCESSFUL ONE?
IT WAS, AND IT WAS NOT, KELEX I HAVE LEARNED WHAT THERE IS TO LEARN I ONLY WISH I HAD NOT.
WHERE IS THE CHILD?
FOLLOWING YOUR EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS, I HAVE PLACED THE MATRIX IN THE THIRD LEVEL LABORATORY, SIRE
GOOD I WILL GO STRAIGHT THERE
IF... WHEN THE LADY LARA CALLS, PLEASE GUIDE HER TO ME.

John Byrne and Dick Giordano's Krypton, from MAN OF STEEL #1.

of something at the end of the sixth issue, have some other artist pick up the reins, making the ends look totally different. So Andy is going to write that as a story, that is broken up into six parts, so that when Bill leaves, he will have put that storyline to rest. The characters will go on, as of issue #7 with a different artist and, theoretically, you could take those six issues, and put them in a book as THE SHADOW—THE CASE OF THE MISS ING WHATEVER

PAT: *Do you think, if a series is presented that way, it allows you, as art director, to have more input?*

RICHARD: It makes more work for me.

BOB: He can't just do a logo and run away

RICHARD: On the old books, you just *do* a logo and run away. I was talking to **Dick Giordano** the other day — besides just doing the regular covers, which takes up a lot of my time, all the new series we're coming out with — we'll be doing a BLACKHAWK mini-series in the DARK KNIGHT Prestige format by **Howard Chaykin, Mike Grell** is doing a GREEN ARROW series in that format — each one is a new start to me. I don't have a rigid design worked out for this kind of format. I think it should be addressed to the material. I make a lot more work for myself that way, but that's what I want to do

It's going to be a matter of juggling lots of work. If I don't it gets too formularized, and sticking everything into a premade mold. I want each one to have its own distinctive look. That excites me — there's room for a lot of growth there.

PAT: *Bob, you are a former SUPERMAN writer, who wrote a lot of stories under Julie Schwartz's editorial reign. I'd like to get a former SUPERMAN writer's opinion...*

BOB: Oh-oh

PAT: *...of the revamp. I realize you have a staff position here at DC, and you don't want to say too much that's negative — if you have negative feelings about it — but I'd like you to be honest. If the opportunity had been thrown in your lap, what would you have done differently?*

BOB: *(Long pause; very long pause.)*

THE MASTER IS DEEPLY TROUBLED, KELEX. YOU HAVE SERVED HIM ALL HIS LIFE, MUCH LONGER THAN I. HAVE YOU DEDUCED THE ORIGIN OF HIS DISTRESS?
EVERYONE ON KRYPTON SEEMS DISTRESSED, KELOR.
BUT IT IS BEYOND THE RANGE OF MY PROGRAMMING TO COMPREHEND THE CAUSE.

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find kind of annoying. It's *not* Krypton."

I'm really indifferent about it I haven't seen anything in it yet that I'm thrilled about — "Wow! This is a great change!" On the other hand, the change in the planet Krypton I find kind of annoying.

PAT: *Good — so did I. I never liked the movie Krypton, and this is too similar.*

BOB: Whether it's like the movie Krypton or not, it's *not* Krypton. I can even cope with the Kents still being alive, even though it throws out the entire premise of my SECRET YEARS mini series.

RICHARD: We were afraid you'd notice that.

BOB: Well, that whole thing got negated. I'm glad it came out beforehand.

Basically, I had my chance to do Superman. I did Superman the way *I* thought Superman should be done. When Julie was editing the character, he had close to a dozen of us doing stories for him. Each of us had his own interpretation of how Superman would act, what Superman would do, and for the most part they were pretty much the same — just differences in writer's personality. This is just one more interpretation — it's gotten a lot more hype.

PAT: *Do you think it is good for a character — if he appears in several different books — to have one person who is the major writer, who makes the decisions about what the character is and what he isn't?*

BOB: I don't think it has to be the writer I think it can be the editor. I think, even with a dozen different writers working for Julie, you had a standard of Superman that was Julie's If you've got a real strong editor, he'll say, "No, no, this is not the way Superman acts. This is the way we've established him," and you've got a set of ground rules. If it's a writer who is writing two out of three of the books, and is calling the shots on the third, it functions the same as having an editor who is editing all three books and keeping a fairly tight rein on the writers. It could be the artist, just as well, depending on the situation. It's just a matter of having one person who's in charge, that's all. I think you need that on any project — on any kind of a job, there has to be one person who is the ultimate source of knowledge — "Yes, we do this; no, we don't do that." In this case, it's **John Byrne**

PAT: *Let's move to something that I know is close to your heart — 'MAZING MAN.*

BOB AND RICHARD: Yaaayyyy!

PAT: *We were told in issue* #9 or #10 of 'MAZING MAN, that if sales really picked up, it might be uncancelled

BOB: True.

PAT: *. . .though I tend to think that you didn't really have enough information by that time to really be able to tell. Did you see any change at all?*

BOB: Well, #12, I'll tell you

PAT: *Well, a Miller cover. . .*

BOB: Thank you, Frank.

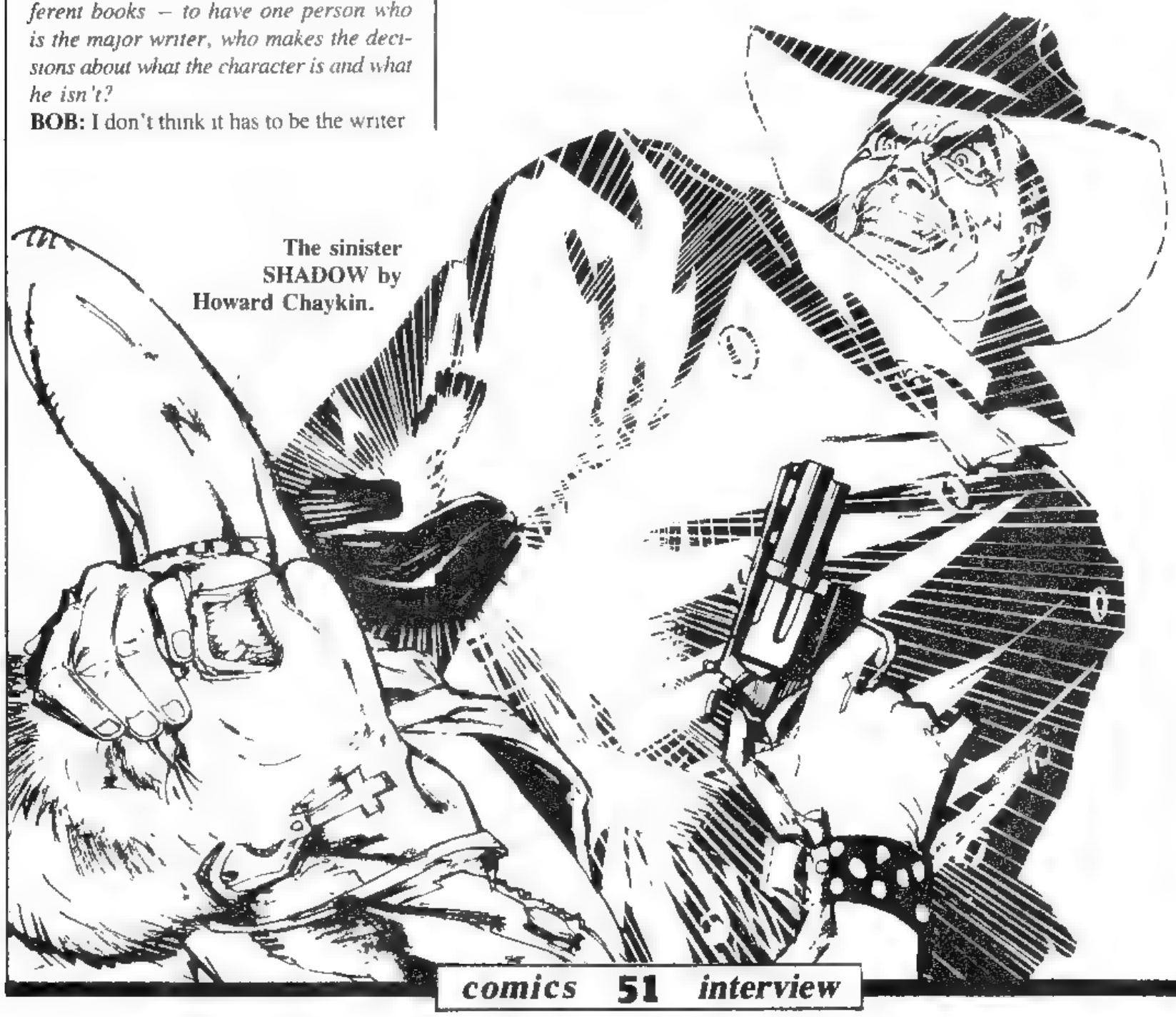
We did have a lot of information, because by #9, it was only direct, there was no more newsstand distribution. We started out with limited newsstand distribution. .

RICHARD: It didn't sell in Peoria. . .

BOB: And it wasn't on sale in my town It did sell very well in the town where my brother lives, though

So, all we were basing it on was the direct response, and it had leveled out, on the wrong side of acceptable. I would like to think the increase in sales on #12 was because everybody woke up and said, "Wow — this is a great book, let's buy it," but I'm sure the sales went up more than 50 percent because of the **Frank Miller** cover which is how we got the 'MAZING MAN SPECIAL.

All along, my feeling has been that if you can get people to read it, they will come back and read it again. The problem



The sinister SHADOW by Howard Chaykin.

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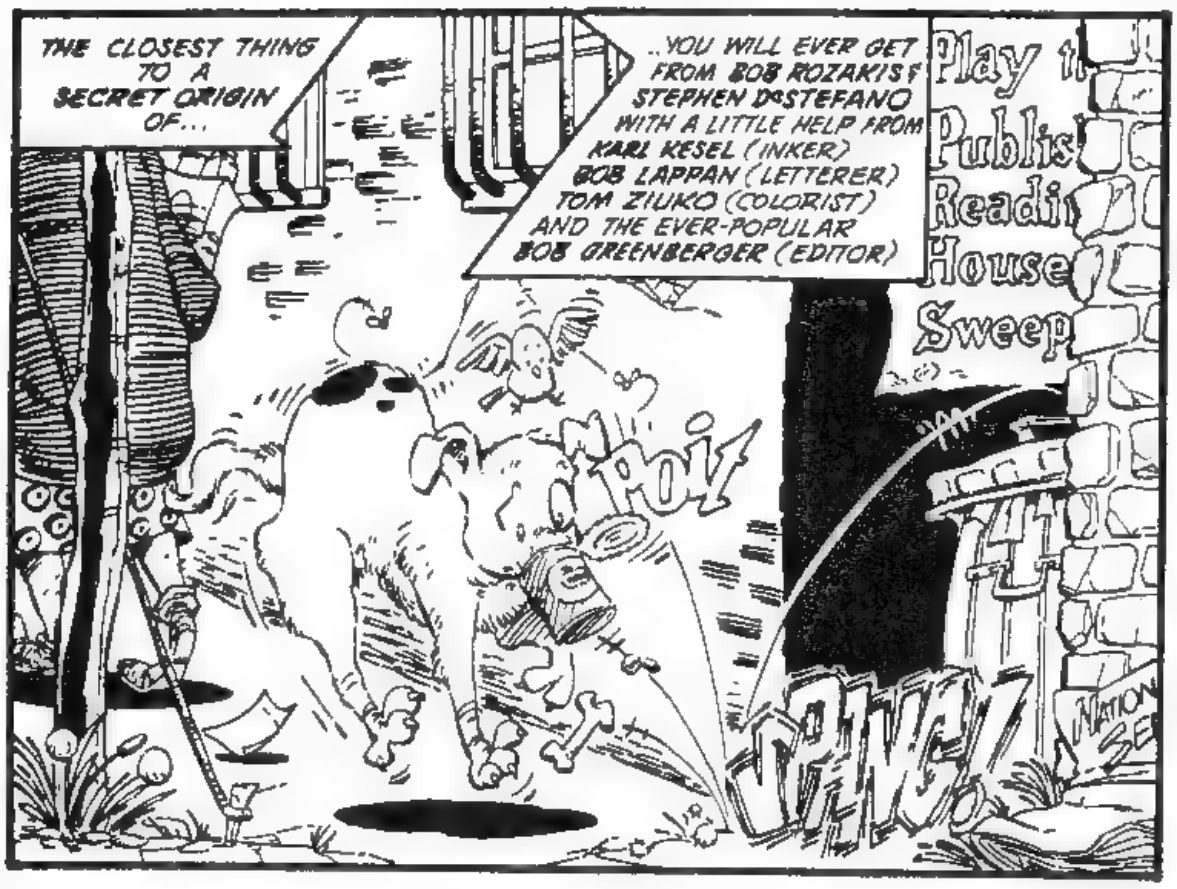
"We could come out and say 'Superman's


THE CLOSEST THING TO A SECRET ORIGIN OF...
..YOU WILL EVER GET FROM BOB ROZAKIS & STEPHEN DeSTEFANO WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM KARL KESEL (INKER) BOB LAPPAN (LETTERER) TOM ZIUKO (COLORIST) AND THE EVER-POPULAR BOB GREENBERGER (EDITOR)
POW
CRUNCH

was in getting them to read it the first time. A lot of people thought it was our answer to Star Comics; they thought it was just a kiddie book; they thought it was just stupid. Up until the time I was talking to Frank, around #9, and things were not going well, he said, "Is there anything I can do — can I do a cover for you?" And I said, "Absolutely!"

I came up with the idea of 'MAZING MAN sleeping and dreaming about Dark Knight. Frank sent in only the Batman and Robin figures, and we said, "What's missing?" I answered, "We need 'Mazing Man hanging onto the cape, flying along behind them, going, 'Wheeee!'"

Then **Stephen DeStefano** pencilled in 'Mazing Man, and **Karl Kesel** inked him in the **Frank Miller** style for that part of the cover. I think it worked — I got one nasty letter from someone who sent back the issue ripped into shreds, saying he felt he had been duped into buying it because he's a DARK KNIGHT fan. Did he read it? I have no idea.

PAT: *I've always had the feeling, reading 'MAZING MAN, that there were large parts of yourself in this. How much of what went on in the book had input from things that you remember as a kid, or from day-to-day life...*

BOB: Virtually all of it. Every married couple that I know is Brenda and Eddie, to one extent or another. I had somebody say to me, after the story where Brenda drags Eddie to the office party, "Did you bug my apartment? I've had that conversation." Well, so have I.

PAT: *(Laughter.)* So have I.

BOB: Basically, these are things that happen. Lots of the little bits are directly related to things that really occurred. The whole business of the cat in the wall started out with **Andy Helfer** and the cat who was in his bathroom wall. We had already decided on the cat-sitting storyline, because Stephen was cat-sitting for **Ed Hannigan**, we took the two incidents and mushed them together, and there was the story.

PAT: *What about the relationship between Denton Fixx and his editor?*

BOB: *(Laughter.)* **Alan Gold** insists that he's not Bernie Cornfeld — to some extent, he isn't. Bernie is kind of a conglomeration of Alan, and **Julie Schwartz**, and every other editor in the business, with a little **Bob Rozakis** thrown in.

That was the closest we came to doing a parody. The biggest parody, the one I found the most fun, was "Crisis on BC Earth" — the whole idea that "We'll blow them all up and next month we'll bring them all back, because after all, it's comic books! We can do this!"

That actually came up in a meeting to discuss the news coverage we were getting on the changes in Superman. I said, "You know, we could come out next month and say, "Superman's pregnant — Kryptonian men can do that ' They'll give us lots of coverage, and the following month we can say, 'No, it turns out he wasn't.' This is comic books — these aren't real people!"

PAT: *I remember talking with Bob Greenberger during CRISIS and he said it was part of Mike Barr's attitude toward CRISIS, too. Just because we say now we're not going to change any of this stuff back, ten years from now, if Jenette Kahn and Dick Giordano aren't around anymore, someone could say, "Hey — Supergirl was a wonderful idea!"*

BOB: Honda still thinks she is. We just did another traffic safety book with Supergirl in it. As far as Honda and the Department of Transportation are concerned, she's not dead.

RICHARD: She's starting to smell a little

BOB: To get back to 'MAZING MAN...

Most of the stories had some basis in fact. Eddie's father being a fireman was based on the fact that my father was in the fire department for 35 years. The relationships between the characters are all based on people I know..

PAT: *Do you think there's any format that 'MAZING MAN could appear in that would be successful, other than the standard 75¢ book?*

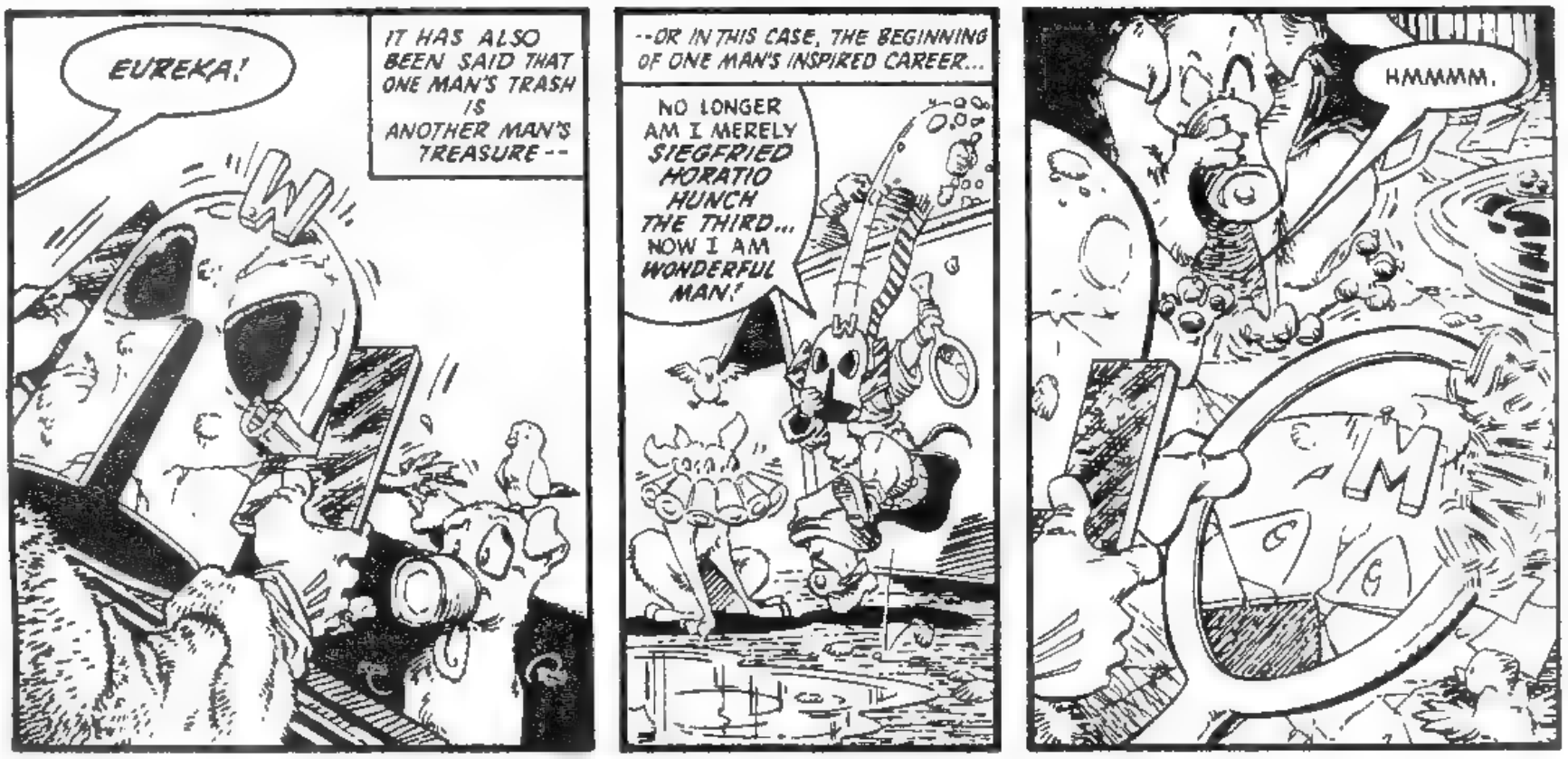
BOB: I don't think it's a matter of format, I think it's a matter of market.

PAT: *Sometimes format determines market...*

BOB: I think it would make a great TV show, and it would probably be pretty good as a newspaper comic strip, with collections in paperback, like GARFIELD.

When we sat down to do the promotional poster, before the first issue came out, and I talked with **Dick Giordano**, and **Bruce Bristow**, and **Alan Gold**, and some others, everybody had a different idea of how to promote the book, and what the book was about. That's how we came up with the Sunday comic-strip format for the poster and the ad, because the only way you're going to get people to buy this book

pregnant — Kryptonian men can do that.'''


EUREKA!
IT HAS ALSO BEEN SAID THAT ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE --
--OR IN THIS CASE, THE BEGINNING OF ONE MAN'S INSPIRED CAREER...
NO LONGER AM I MERELY SIEGFRIED HORATIO HUNCH THE THIRD... NOW I AM WONDERFUL MAN!
HMMMM.

is if they read something. So, we came up with that gag.

Some other ideas were 'Mazing Man bursting through, like we did on the cover of #1.

RICHARD: Any single image didn't get across the flavor of the book, the resonance of the reality that you're asking Bob about. That's the strength of the book — you can't do that in a single image very well.

BOB: It was difficult to do even in the 12 panels of the poster.

PAT: *Do you think that, maybe 25 years ago, when there was a greater range of material being published in comics, it would have had a better shot?*

BOB: Twenty-five years ago, the audience wouldn't have understood it, because the audience was virtually all kids. I got a letter from somebody — and I ran it in one of the letter columns — complaining that the stories were too sophisticated for his four-year-old kid. My response was .

PAT: *"Why are you reading it to your four-year-old kid?"*

BOB: "This is not aimed at your four-year-old kid, any more than M*A*S*H should be the first TV show he watches." Yes, it has a childlike look, but it is not a childish book, and it's not aimed at little kids.

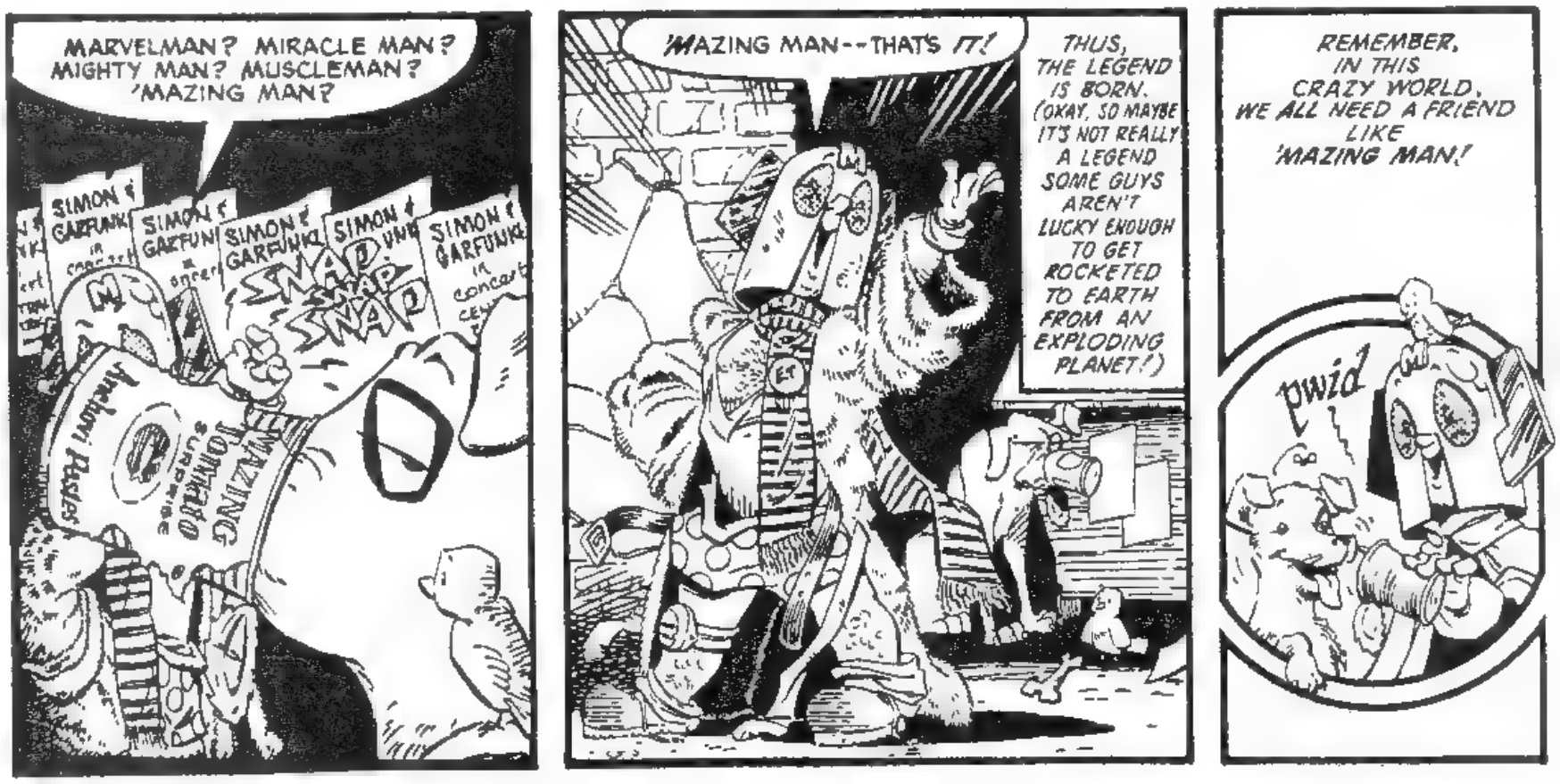
PAT: *Childlike but not childish...*

BOB: Right — it was aimed at an older audience, an audience that could appreciate it.

I think there is an audience there. There certainly are enough 35-year-old comic book readers now, that can understand and relate to the problems of a young married couple, and the problems of jobs, and being divorced. Twenty five years ago, you didn't have that in a comic-book audience — "Oh, that's big people stuff." The closest you got to a real romantic relationship was Batman got kissed by Kathy Kane, or Vicki Vale, and Lois was always trying to find out if Clark Kent was Superman...

PAT: *She broke more pairs of scissors...*

BOB: "Lois, go away!"


MARVELMAN? MIRACLE MAN? MIGHTY MAN? MUSCLEMAN? 'MAZING MAN?
SIMON & GARFUNKEL
SNAP SNAP SNAP
'MAZING TOMATO SOUPIE
'MAZING MAN--THAT'S IT!
THUS, THE LEGEND IS BORN. (OKAY, SO MAYBE IT'S NOT REALLY A LEGEND SOME GUYS AREN'T LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET ROCKETED TO EARTH FROM AN EXPLODING PLANET!)
REMEMBER, IN THIS CRAZY WORLD, WE ALL NEED A FRIEND LIKE 'MAZING MAN!
pwid

© 1986 DC Comics Inc

"It's almost like you're catering to

RICK WERFT

Rick Werft is a rarity in the world of comic-book specialty-shop owners. One senses that he enjoys his work in a way that few people in the adult work force do. There is something joyful about the Comic Castle that makes it seem more like a kid's neighborhood clubhouse than a place of business. Riding herd on all this fun is Rick Werft. Rick is truly a product of McLuhan's global village. He is a complete media mutant, a true lover of modern American popular culture. Yet there is a deeper side to Rick, too, a cultured, refined, and caring side that makes him a pleasure to be around, a perfect friend. Rick's enthusiasm for things creative and his encouragement of his various artistically-inclined customers and friends further defines this unique young man. If all this wasn't enough, Rick is very knowledgeable about comics history and the ins and outs of buying, selling and trading popular culture memorabilia. This interview took place in Rick's townhouse in his "video lair." As usual when we're together, the banter was relaxed, informative and amusing. So just relax, grab a beer and enjoy the conversation...

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Rick Werft
Born: 4 July 1953 — Pomona, CA
Occupation: Entrepreneur
Hobbies: Collecting laserdiscs, collecting well-written, well-drawn comics
Goals Yet To Be Achieved: A couple hundred grand in the bank and still have tons of leisure time
Favorite Comics: DR. STRANGE, SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN

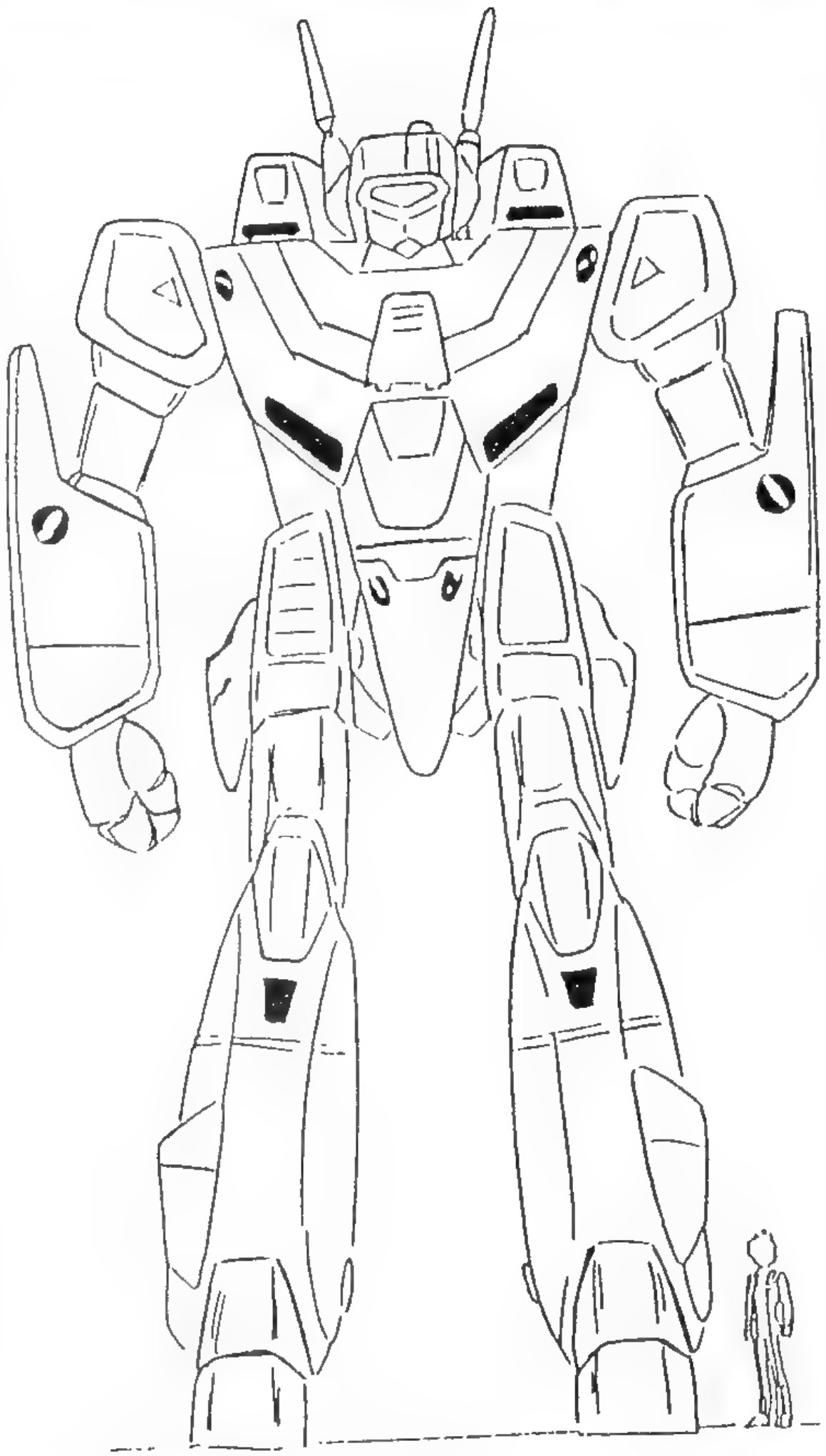
KEN JONES: *We're here in the video lair of Rick Werft, the proprietor of the Comic Castle in Fullerton, California.*
RICK WERFT: And in Victorville, California!
KEN: *"Now in two convenient locations." Rick, how did you become involved with comics?*

junkies when you're in this business."

Bashful Rick Werft — a retailer who's learned the meaning of exposure.

RICK WERFT

"ROBOTECH's become a real phenomenon,



VERITECH BATTLOID

RICK: Initially I was about ten years old I picked up a SUPERMAN or maybe a JIMMY OLSEN. I liked those. Then I got into science-fiction books like ADAM LINK, ROBOT by **Eando Binder,** started collecting SPIDER-MAN basically through school. I remember visiting the drug stores in Fresno, California, looking for the latest 12¢ comics. I was mostly into DC at first, then one summer — I remember it just like it happened yesterday — we were going to the mountains and we stopped off at a store and I checked the comic section and there was the SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #1. I took it up to the mountains and read it and thought "this is really interesting stuff." I was really excited about it so I started collecting Marvels, and before I knew it all my DCs were on the back shelf and I was into Marvel — I still read some DCs like SUPERMAN — and I continued collecting until college. Then sold off most of my collection because I needed money for my film collection. I was into collecting 16mm films and movie previews at that point — so, from one collection to another.

KEN: *How did that evolve into you owning two stores at "two convenient locations"?*

RICK: Well, I guess you'd say I had a fling right out of college with CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN magazine. I wrote an article for them. I was always interested in sci-fi and fantasy, which stirred my imagination. After writing some articles on STAR TREK, I attracted the attention of my college professor, who wanted me to be his writing partner. To support me, he got me a job as a night manager of a bookstore in Fullerton called The Book Harbor. Our partnership never materialized, because he was too busy book hunting. He was really into used books. I grew in that environment and was able to buy comics because the managing partner there didn't care about them. So, I bought whatever came in the door. I built up a whole collection this way and since they couldn't pay me a yuppie's wage, they let me take whatever I could earn on the side selling comics. Some Saturdays I made more money selling comic books than they made selling used books. I am sure that didn't thrill them, but eventually it came to the point where my old college professor bought that used book store and encouraged me to open a shop myself. At the time I thought it was the right move. So through the efforts of both the owner, **Al Ralston**, and **Jerome Joseph**, his partner, I was able to secure a building with no credit or anything. With their help I was able to buy a major collection and my father gave financial aid. When I bought out a couple of used book stores going out of business I had enough stock to open a store and did. I have been in business at the main store for three years and it's a building, changing process. I've accumulated a lot of collections since then. Eventually, I had too much stuff for the main store, so I had a choice of garaging it for the next 60 years or putting it out for sale. As far as Victorville is concerned, it's an hour and fifteen minutes away, so I knew I wouldn't duplicate my clientele in Fullerton, which I didn't want to do. I wanted to be in a place that isn't as competitive as Orange County, and a place that had clean air.

KEN: *What kind of an audience is there in Victorville, which the last time I was*

like G.I. JOE, which sells like crazy."

there — a hundred years ago — was a rural place? Is there an audience for comic books?

RICK: You'd be surprised. There's an Air Force base up there, and some of those guys are into comics. There's an eight screen movie house downtown. At the time I went in I was the only real magazine shop, but now there's another. Still, I am the only exclusive science fiction and fantasy shop. People are people everywhere. They want to read and they want to know, while being entertained. I see different things sell up there than sell in Fullerton

KEN: *Let's talk about that. I am really interested in who your audience is, and what they buy. Can you break that down for us?*

RICK: Well, people like **Ken Jones** buy everything.

KEN: *That's right, the COMICS INTERVIEW'S own Ken L. Jones shops exclusively at the Comic Castle in Fullerton!*

RICK: Outstanding! Mini-series are really good sellers. Just about everything has been selling in massive quantities. I think that Marvel and DC and the independents are doing something right. They've analyzed their market and figured out what people want to see and they give it to them. Give them #1 issues, mini-series, SECRET WARS and CRISIS tie ins

KEN: *What do the young people read — after all, they're the future of our industry?*

RICK: ROBOTECH, that's what they read. ROBOTECH, a lot of WEB OF SPIDERMAN, IRONMAN, X-MEN, AVENGERS. Again, your're catering mostly to those who like the Marvels. I don't see a lot of experimentation with the kids *per se.*

KEN: *How about your older customers, what do they buy?*

RICK: A lot of the independents. There are so many titles coming out every week. A lot of people will try something new if the cover looks good. They examine the artwork and look for good artwork — that's what I always look for. I would say that independents sell on the whole less well primarily because of their stiff price tag. If they were to drop most of their product to 75¢, I think they might double their sales easily, and draw in a lot of younger customers and even a larger slice of the older crowd. Nobody wants to pay those kinds of heavy prices to try something new, but I think the quality of the independents, especially the paper they're printed on, is really nice. I don't think I've sold more than a hundred copies of any given independent, except one.

KEN: *What do you think your bestselling independent is?*

RICK: ROBOTECH, unquestionably. Whatever you get in — they're gone. I would say that's become a real phenomenon, like G.I. JOE — which still sells like crazy. There's only a handful of books like that. X-MEN, G.I. JOE and ROBOTECH. You could probably stock a whole store and run a whole business just on those three titles.

KEN: *That's something else I want to talk about. You have a unique store in the sense that you have toys, TV GUIDE, movie stills and all kinds of unusual stuff that other specialty shops don't have.*

RICK: That's mainly because I am more interested in that. I am mainly a film buff. The comics are kind of film on paper. Movie stars, classic movies — Bogart and all that — was an influence on me and a

1965 Paperback Library, Inc

From the Beginning...

For more than two decades the boundless imagination of Robert Crumb has left readers scrambling for superlatives. What it all boils down to is that you have to experience the funniest and most original cartoonist of our time for yourself. Now, for the first time, **The Complete Crumb Comics** collects all the major strips, cartoons, illustrations, and sketchbooks, including hundreds of pages never before published in the U.S.! *The Complete Crumb Comics* will include:

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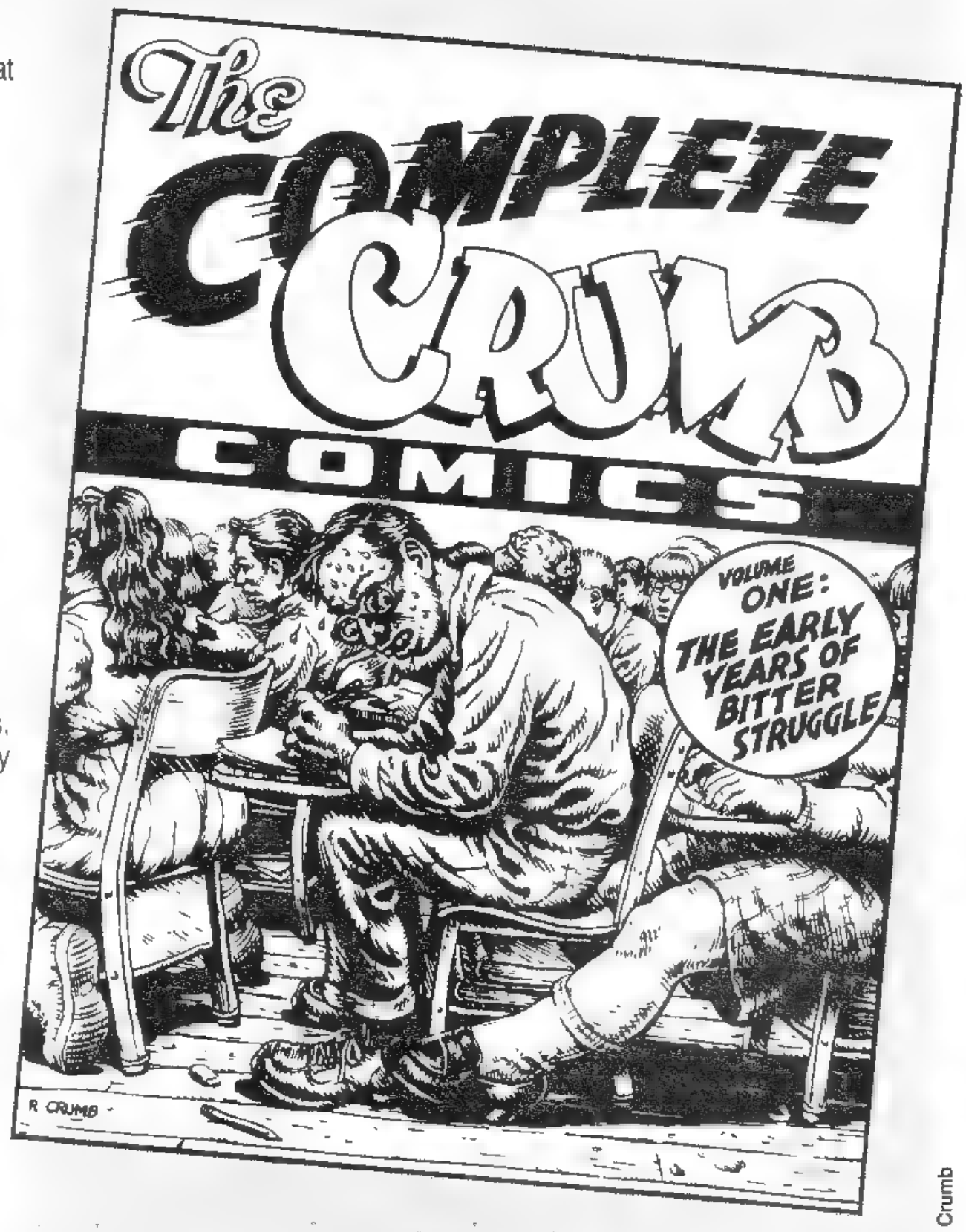

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"They want it hot off the press!!"

lot of other people growing up. Watching movies and TV All the deadtime I had was spent watching all these old flicks. **Cary Grant, Boris Karloff, Bogart,** and they became very real to me, as well as being a lot of fun. So I like to have stuff in the store that I like, that generates excitement, and I think that a lot of other people enjoy too as part of their good times growing up. I sell media stuff — STAR TREK, STAR WARS, **Disney;** the shows I grew up with and enjoy. I think that if I just had to sell comics I might be a little bored. I like a lot of variety, a lot of new things coming in, toys, TV GUIDE, whatever.

KEN: *One thing I notice about your store — and I hit most of the Southern California stores as Dave Kraft's representative — when you come into your store you either have your large screen laserdisc machine on, with an interesting movie, or Roy is blowing away everybody with fantastic obscure music.*

RICK: Roy is incredible in terms of the music he comes up with. It's amazing how everyone remarks that they've heard that kind of music. We have four speakers that form a kind of quadraphonic set up so Dave can pipe through stuff that he found from the Forties or Fifties, obscure titles that nobody's ever heard. The video thing is nice. We have a giant screen TV and laserdiscs, so that we can run movies for a couple of reasons. One thing it does is, when parents come in and bring their kids, they have something to do while their kids look at the comic books. They can sit back and watch a James Bond movie while the kids pile up more and more stuff, which I don't object to at all Another reason is I am just a real film buff. I have always liked to show 16mm films to groups of people. Naturally I enjoy having the movies around the store. It's great to earn money by working around comic books, movies and things that I would be looking at in my freetime anyway. It's really a hobby become a profession. I try to make the Comic Castle as fun a place as I can and it seems to contribute to the merriment. I think it attracts a lot of people from the streets when they see a rock video or something, they just cruise on in and check it out.

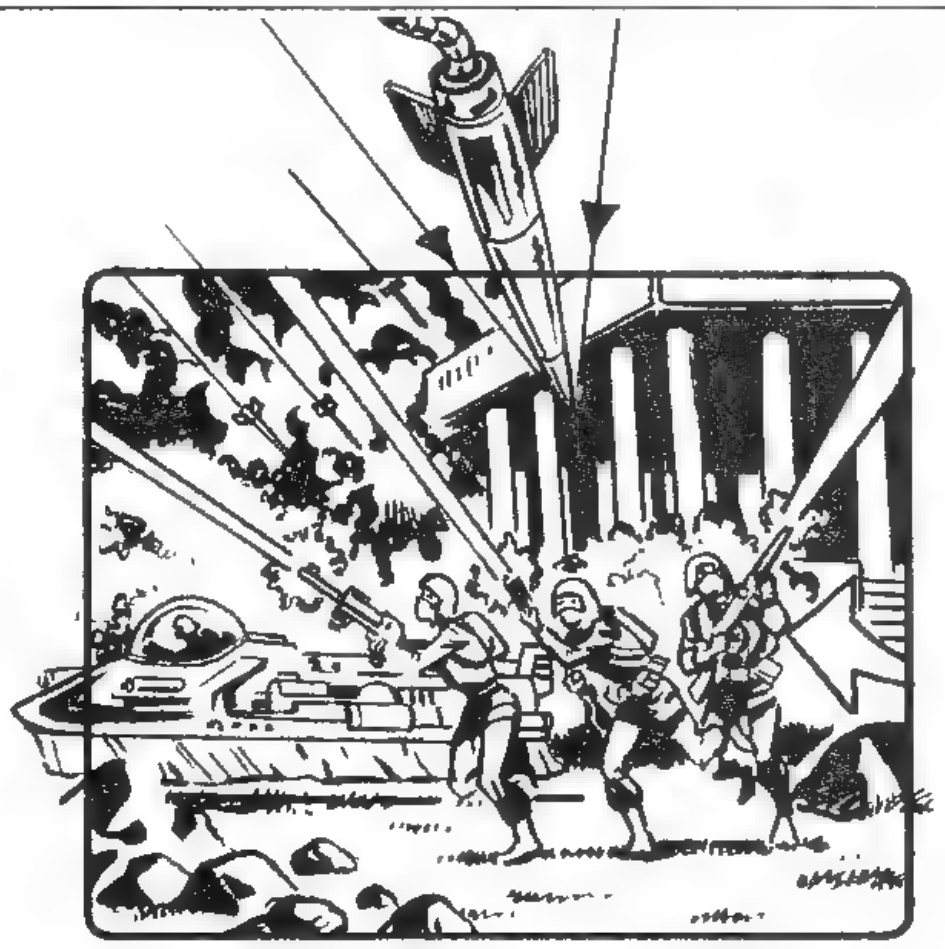
KEN: *You do have some interesting and well-known customers at your shop.*

KEN: B.C. Boyer, who created the MASKED MAN buys his comics at my shop. **Paul Power,** who works for **Spielberg** and others as a storyboard artist, is a regular. **Brian Murray,** who will be working for **Neal Adams,** is a regular. **Rick Griffen,** the noted underground artist, comes in occasionally when we have stuff he wants, like FATE MAGAZINE.

IN FRONT OF CAPTURED BUILDINGS.....COBRA SOLDIERS FIRE LASER WEAPONS AS PARACHUTES AND PLANES MOVE THRU IN BG.... THE SOLDIERS REACT TO:
SFX: RISING ROCKET WHINE

"You could probably run a whole business on X-MEN, G.I. JOE and ROBOTECH." Hoberg/Meugniot storyboard from the animated G.I. JOE.

Mike Royer, the Disney artist and inker for **Kirby**. They're an interesting bunch and it makes me feel good to know that people in the profession come into my shop and buy comics and trade or sell artwork — it makes me feel that I'm involved. Three or four years ago I couldn't imagine being at the point I am at now, rubbing shoulders with all these comics people. We've been able to have **Steve Englehart,**


A COBRA HOVERCRAFT ZIPS THRU SC. THREE COBRA SOLDIERS RUN INTO SC (TOWARDS CAMERA!!). MISSILES ZOOM IN, EXPLODING IN BG. ARROW INTO SC FROM OVER CAMERA....

© 1986 Sunbow Productions

RICK WERFT

"I'll tell those publishers one thing!"

Butch Guice, Marv Wolfman — writers and artists who are located elsewhere — in for weekend in-store promotions.

KEN: *Do you think that specialty shops as we know them will continue to exist in their present form or will they change and evolve in the future?*

RICK: I think that they're already evolving. Years ago, when specialty shops first opened, they were strictly comic books. I think today the comic-book shops branch out a little bit more into the media, gaming, and popular culture stuff. I think they'll continue to be strong as long as there continues to be a direct sales market with independent comics, and Marvel and DC continue to do direct-market titles. I think we will be in trouble if we have to compete with Waldenbooks and Alpha Beta Supermarkets, if everybody puts out the same stuff on their racks and gets it at the same time. But as long as we're getting everything basically a week or two weeks ahead of any other chain, we're going to be okay. Our comics are air-shipped to the main distributors. That's what comic-book readers want, they want it hot off the press, hot off the griddle, they want it now! That's what the comic shops have over the other places, which don't get it as quickly. It's almost like you're catering to junkies when you're in this business. You're dealing comics, which is a mind expanding type of medium. However, it's clean, it's fun, everybody has a good time and I think it's great.

KEN: *You deal in comic-books, and you know the audience. What would you tell some of the publishers that read this magazine and might not have that close grass-roots contact with the audience that you do? What would you tell them about their audience or, better yet, what would you like to see happen in comics that isn't happening.*

RICK: I am sure that there are certain artists I'd like to see work more. I'd like to see certain writers and artists team up together. If there could be such a thing as fan requests for writer/artist team-ups and if one of the companies could make it happen, then we might see some interesting things happen, even character crossovers between the two companies. But as to whether the companies will ever combine again after the DC/Marvel fiasco's anybody's guess. Seeing a tidal wave of materi al every week, one sees the good and the bad.

KEN: *And the ugly.*

RICK: Definitely the ugly. When I was collecting titles in the old days I use to worry that I would run out of things to read, that I wouldn't have enough to last 'til next week or next month.

KEN: *Until the spoon runs out.*

RICK: Exactly. Now we really have a lot of stuff coming out. Only if you are totally unemployed with all kinds of time can you read it all. There's as much as you could ever want to read and if you run out you can go through back issues of umpteen titles from the past and present.

KEN: *You see a lot of comics that maybe other people don't. What do you know of that's obscure and worthwhile?*

RICK: I think of CEREBUS, NEXUS, GRIMJACK, T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS. What's the status on that?

KEN: *It's in limbo, unfortunately.*

RICK: I like a lot of the horror work **John Bolton** is one of my favorites.

KEN: *The HALL OF HORROR thing from Eclipse was great.*

RICK: It was incredible!

KEN: *Do you think that, for instance, the re-publishing of material in Eclipse's NIGHTMARES would spur readers to*

© 1985 John Bolton

"— I ate 100 to 150 issues at $1.50 each."

search out those old Warren books? Does that happen?

RICK: Not too much, because it isn't well publicized where those stories originated. Most people who read that are just interested in the comic they're reading, and they don't research it that much. I'll tell you one thing I don't like is companies like Marvel and DC publishing DREADSTAR AND COMPANY and LEGION OF SUPERHEROES reprinting recent material. I hate that about the TEEN TITANS, too. I'll tell those publishers one thing if they want to hear it. I've dropped my order of each of those from 100 to 200 of each down to about 60 and on the DREADSTAR AND COMPANYs I only order 25 copies for each store. I am not going to order any back stock and very little for front stock, except for my most hardcore customers, on any reprint titles that they choose to do like this. I think it's cheating the audience because it's already available in its original form. These are not original editions yet they're not saying that it's a reprint on the cover or anything. People are confused by this.

KEN: *It's funny, I don't know why they don't reprint older stuff. I mean Marvel and DC both have fantastic libraries of classic stuff. DR. STRANGE by Ditko, FANTASTIC FOUR by Kirby.*

RICK: Even the '50's stuff, be it superheroes, horror, or science fiction. They could reprint CAPTAIN AMERICAs from the 1940s with that great old **Kirby** art. Remember how great those were in the original FANTASY MASTERPIECES?

KEN: *The MICRONAUTS reprints seemed redundant.*

RICK: Many of those Baxter reprints were ill-chosen exercises in repetitive redundancy *ad nauseam.*

KEN: *How well do graphic novels sell?*

RICK: Graphic novels sell real well, by and large. Certain titles sell better than others. CAPTAIN MARVEL sold real well, obviously, ELRIC, by and large they all sell well, especially the X-MEN. I have sold from 20 to 100 copies each of the graphic novels, averaging about 50, which is incredible with the high price tag on them. On the other hand, First's $11.95 AMERICAN FLAG Graphic Novel is another example of poor selling reprints at a high price.

KEN: *One thing that interests me is what your actual profit on a given title is?*

RICK: Well, after air-shipping costs and all, it works out to between 40% to 50% on most titles. To get to that point the distributors require that you order over five thousand books. I think I order around ten thousand books a month.

KEN: *That's for both stores, right?*

RICK: For both stores, right, so 40 to 50% mark up. But you've got to remember that we're eating a lot of the titles that we guess wrong on. It's almost like a Las Vegas crap shoot when you order over 200 titles a month. You go by intuition but still you might miss **Alan Moore's** debut on SWAMP THING because it appears in the middle of a run.

KEN: *What was the one that got away?*

RICK: I would say ELEMENTALS. I ordered 50 copies of #1 and sold out in 2 days. If only I could have gotten 200 or 300 more copies! Now they're going for $10 apiece.

KEN: *Is that because of a low print run?*

RICK: Everybody orders cautiously on the independents, only about 10 to 50 copies. A lot of the Pacific Comics stuff we got taken on. For example, when we had prepublicity on an issue of PACIFIC PRESENTS which on publication suddenly didn't have **Dave Stevens** in it, I ate 100 to 150 issues at $1.50 each. It was no fun. To avoid that experience I think we all play it a little closer to the vest and we get burned that way, too.

KEN: *If somebody wandered off the street into your shop and wanted to know what the whole comic-book experience was about, what would you show them?*

RICK: My mind goes immediately back to that Baxter book, KULL #2, drawn by **John Bolton**. That's a favorite, that's a classic I would recommend. I think comics should contain good art and good stories that work together to storytell. A lot of comics fall short of that. But some comics did it so well. "Anatomy Lesson" in SWAMP THING by **Alan Moore** is one that comes to mind. Comics that move you like poetry and give you that illusion of movement, that's the excitement. When you find one like that it's as good as sex.

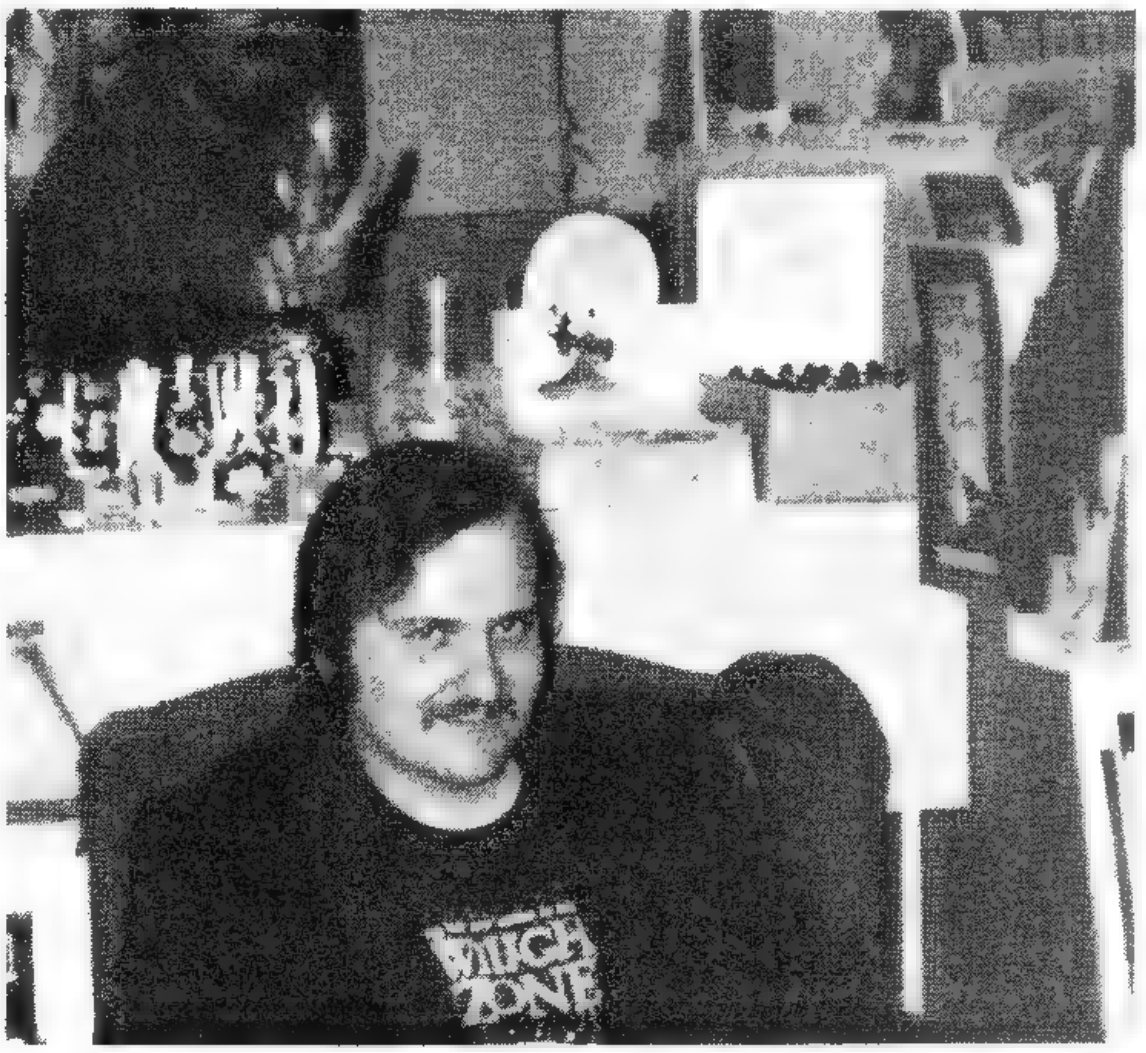
KEN: *Good comics, good sex, with Dr. Rick. Do you have any final things to say?*

RICK: Keep buying comics! Try out some independents. Look for the artwork you like. Hopefully your comic shop will have some 50¢ boxes so that you can try out some unusual kinds of comics. People should try new things. Have fun, don't be bored. When comics start to bore you, look out. Though, hopefully, it's worth wading through a ditch full of crap to get to the good stuff. I am going to keep on collecting and keep on selling because I enjoy it, and I want to continue to upgrade my filing systems, marketing techniques, and improve the store in general, striving for the very best in presentation.

Being perpetually exhausted, my wife asked me the other night if I was having an affair or had a mistress and I said, "Yeah, she's the Comic Castle and she takes everything I've got, but what's left I give to you." I never said, "Art defies translation."

KEN: *I guess we'll end on that note. Let's watch some more videos.*

RICK: You bet.



HIS MASTER'S VOICE...

CHARLES SCHULZ SPEAKS!

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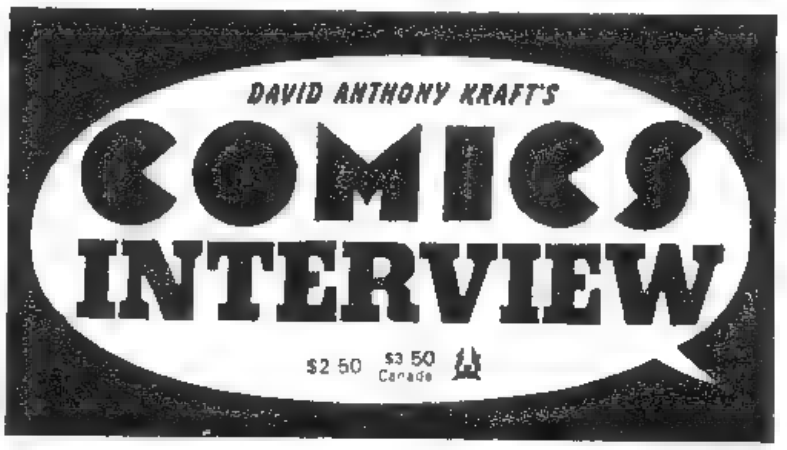
Naturally, that's not all! Every issue of COMICS INTERVIEW is packed from cover to cover full of interesting interviews with writers, artists, publishers and promoters from all walks of comics life—stars of the screen to letterers and colorists! We've got 'em all...and so will you, when you get COMICS INTERVIEW!



#47

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S
COMICS INTERVIEW

MORE INTERVIEWS THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE!

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

MUMY/FERRER UPDATE

Hi, DAK,

You might want to know that Miguel and I are currently working on THE DREAMWEAVER graphic novel for Marvel. It's a spy-detective-adventure story. **Gray Morrow** will be pencilling, inking, and coloring. **Howard Mackie** is the editor. We're just now getting ready to fly to New York to meet with Gray and Howard. I'm glad to say THE COMET MAN did well, and we've got projects going outside of Marvel. We're doing a graphic novel for Pied Piper Press: THE COMPANY, our time-displacement, faerie/human adventure. We've other ideas up our sleeve, and hopefully Miguel and I will be sticking around the pulpground...so to speak.

Bill Mumy
Los Angeles, CA

COMMERCE AND ART

Dear David,

It was great to see the interview with **Frank Frazetta** in #42. But if only you could have gotten him to *open up* a bit more...

But seriously the, well, frankness with which **Mr. Frazetta** spoke made for a lively and informative interview. It was interesting to compare his views on commerce and art (and on the intertwining of the two) in light of what's happening with creators' rights in the world of comics these days. The world in which **Frazetta** has operated for the past many years is one in which the independence and the rights of the artist are more firmly entrenched and more widely recognized and appreciated than has been the custom in comicdom. But now that things are changing in comics, it is interesting to compare and predict how this might change people's attitudes (thus affecting their work, etc).

It is interesting, too, how we seem to count **Frazetta** as "one of our own," even though he has spent more time in his career away from comics than in the world of comics. Maybe he's like a favourite son who moves away to become a big success in the city — he'll always be part of the family. Or maybe we in comicdom like to bask in the reflection of his glory a bit. (I must say that I notice this tendency in my own country. If you were born here or even lived here for a while and you subsequently become famous, then you're counted as a "Canadian," no matter how small or tenuous that connection might be. For instance, **Raymond Burr** lived here for only the first seven years of his life but is almost invariably referred to here as a "Canadian actor." Or, in the world of comics, even though **John Byrne** was born in England and has lived in the States for a number of years, he's still usually tagged as a Canuck here. In fact, technically, I'm not sure *what* his citizenship is these days. Ah, well, when you're chiefly known for hockey, Mounties, snow, and ginger ale, I guess you'll look for fame where you can find it!)

"T.M. Maple"
Box 1272, Station B
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PHOTO Steve Bryant

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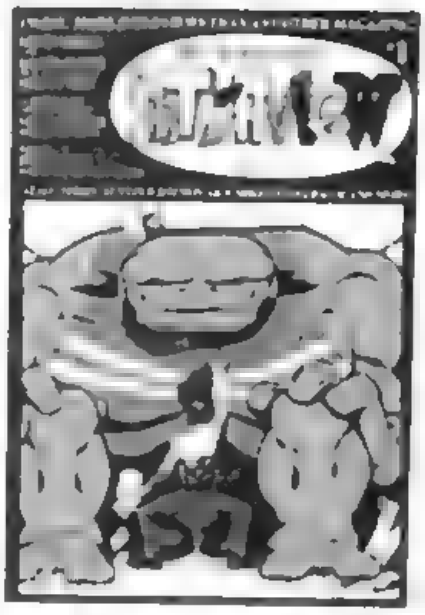
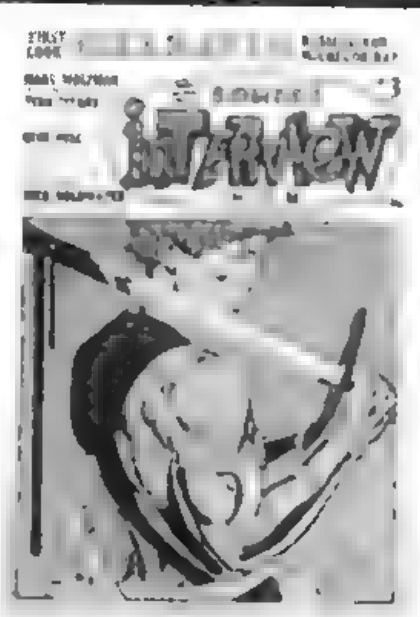
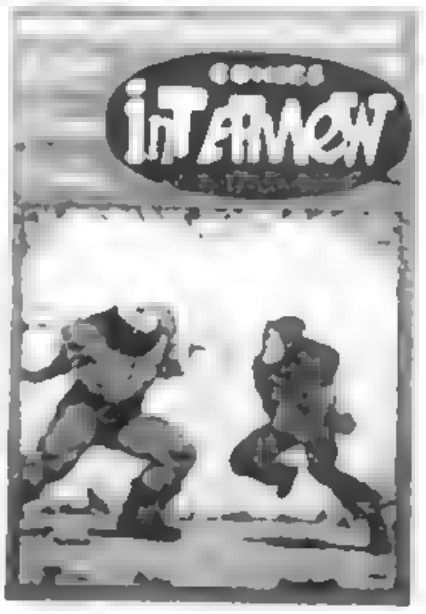


#1-$3.00 **Keith Giffen** on the making of THE OMEGA MEN — **Steve Gerber** speaks out on comics — X-MEN inker **Terry Austin** talks — Marvel's top man, **Jim Galton**, tells all — and much more in this premiere issue!

#2-$3.00 **Miller** raps about RONIN — **Mark Evanier** shares secrets of **Kirby's** NEW GODS — **Steve Gerber** asks **Will Meugniot** about DNAGENTS — **Gene Simmons** of KISS on comics — more! Cover by **Frank Miller**

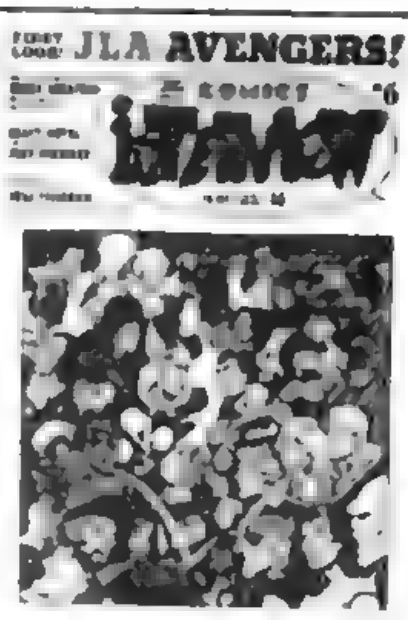


#3-$3.00 **Don McGregor & Craig Russell** on KILLRAVEN — Origins of NEW TEEN TITANS told by **Marv Wolfman** — **Howard Chaykin** on AMERICAN FLAGG — French comics by **Neal Adams** — Cover by **Russell.**



#4-$3.00 **Starlin** speaks about WARLOCK, CAPTAIN MARVEL & DREADSTAR — DC's **Dick Giordano**, part 1 — from **Foster** to **Frazetta**, the last **Roy G. Krenkel** interview — Cover by **Starlin**

#5-$3.00 **Wendy & Richard Pini** — inside ELFQUEST, part [illegible] **Stan Lee** straight from the shoulder [illegible] **Dick Giordano** part 2 — Origins of COMICO Cover by **Wendy Pini**



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#11-$3.00 **John Romita, Jr.** talks about Marvel from IRON MAN to X-MEN — **Doug Moench** (part two) on his stormy career and the state of comics — inside Pacific Comics — more! X-MEN cover by **Romita!**

#12-$3.00 DC artist **Jose Luis Garcia Lopez** (TEEN TITANS, ATARI FORCE) — EC artist **Jack Davis** — TV's **Mr. Rogers** — star scripter **Alan Moore** talks about superheroes — **Louise Simonson** — more!

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#13-$3.00 **Gerry Conway & Roy Thomas** sound off on scripting movies (Conan, Fire & Ice) and comics — a two-fisted talk with outspoken artist **Ernie Colon** — porn star **Kelly Nichols** — **Don Rosa** — more!

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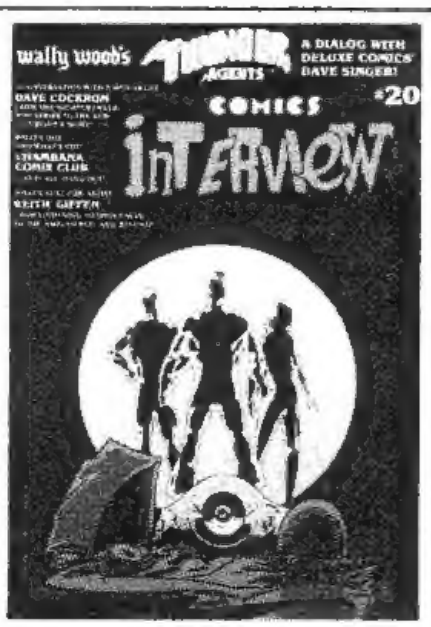

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SUMERIANS, NOT EGYPTIANS, CREATED COMICS

Dear DAK,

I've been enjoying your fine magazine for a few years now but never felt compelled to write a letter until I read **E. Hoffmann Price's** in your **Frank Frazetta** (WOW!) issue. His conclusion that the ancient Egyptians invented comics raises some disagreement with yours truly.

Now, don't get me wrong: the Egyptians deserve credit for many, many wonders. Since our society is relatively familiar with so many of those wonders (the Sphinx, the Pyramids, King Tut, **Boris Karloff** as the Mummy, & "Walk Like an Egyptian" by the **Bangles**), it's not surprising that E.H.P. would give them credit for comics, too.

However, I'd prefer crediting the people who lived in Mesopotamia at the dawn of recorded history for the invention of comics. So, who are these ancient cartoonists? Why, the Sumerians, of course. Yep, those crazy guys who invented writing by pressing a stylus into wet clay tablets. That little trick was called cuneiform and it incorporated *simplified pictures* and wedge-shaped strokes in numerous combinations (an obvious influence on Egyptian hieroglyphics). But I'm not giving them credit for comics for this, oh no, no. Let us examine a certain decorated box done by an unknown Sumerian craftsman around 2700 B.C. The box, commonly known as "The Standard of Ur", was inlaid with shells, lapis lazuli, and red limestone. It depicts a Sumerian military victory and its aftermath — the advance of foot soldiers, the charge of chariots, the lines of prisoners, the servants carrying booty, and finally the king relaxing after the battle. Several devices of representation that simplify the narrative, explain the action, and give the impression of motion are used, and the figures are carefully arranged in superimposed *strips* to achieve a continuous narrative effect.

Now, does that sound like comics or what? Like, lose the lapis lazuli, grab a brush and some india ink and we're in business, dud! What a concept for a maxi-series: CAPTAIN ISHTAR AND HIS SAVAGE SUMERIANS...This issue they face "The Horror of the Hittites!" I like it. I like it. Keep up the good work.

Dave Garcia
2422 E. Verde
Holtville, CA 92250

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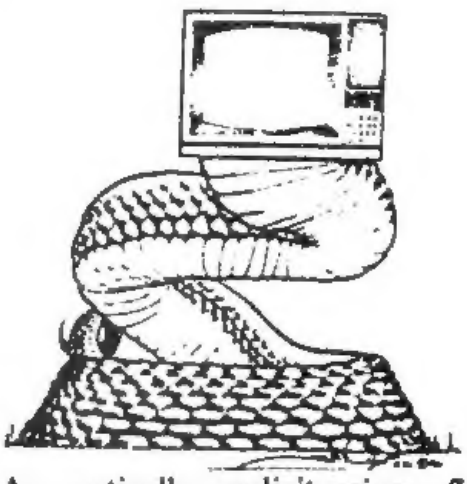

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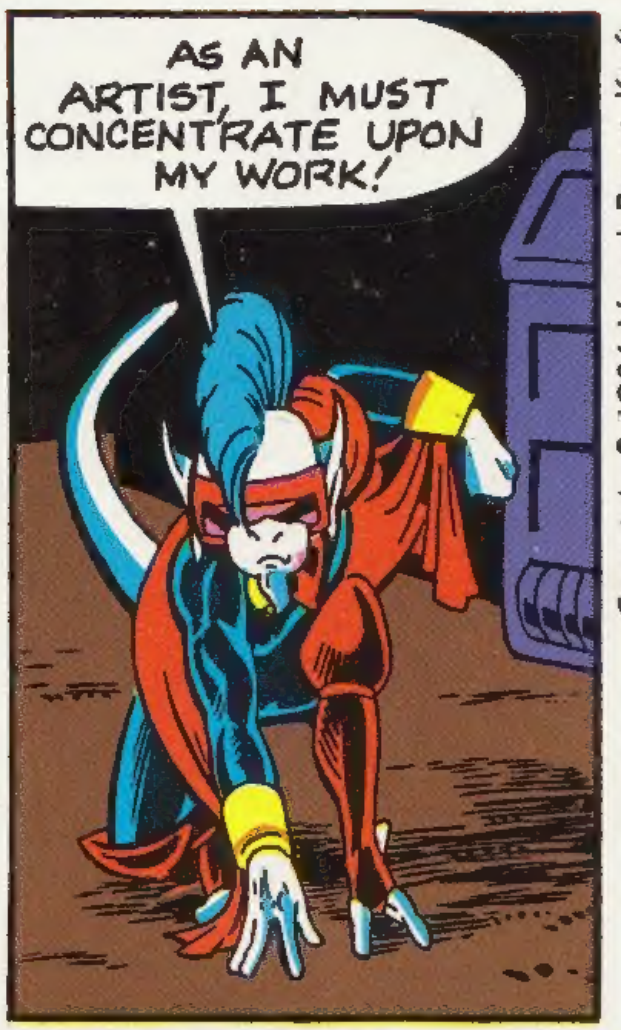

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